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## Supporting Screen Development Nationally

The Screen Resource Organisations gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship of the Australian Film Commission and are members of the Australian Screen Culture Industry Association.

## resistant media

<http://www.anat.org.au/resistant-media/>

**resistant media** is a project being undertaken by the Australian Network for Art and Technology during 1999 which intends to provide a space for artists and cultural activists working with tactical media to conceptualise activist strategies.



#### resistant media: Perspecta99

20 August - 4 October  
<http://www.anat.org.au/resistant-media/>

!recombinant video!nomadic web!

Andrew Garton, Scot McPhee, Melinda Rackham, Francesca da Rimini, Sam de Silva, Josephine Starrs, Rick Vermey.

**resistant media** - Perspecta99 exists solely on the internet, as web exhibitions by participating artists and a listserv where the artists in this project, artists and writers contributing to Perspecta, and the general public, have an opportunity to discuss the politics of art and the internet and develop tactical media strategies collaboratively. Curated by Amanda McDonald Crowley.

On 20 August, the web site will feature live streaming video and audio of the Perspecta99 forum. The listserv will be operational from July 30. For more information, send an email to: [majordomo@autonomous.org](mailto:majordomo@autonomous.org) with "info resistant-media" in the body of the message, or visit <http://www.anat.org.au/resistant-media>.



#### resistant media: Nxt Exposure

Northern Territory Exposure Multimedia Symposium  
 Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

30 September - 4 October  
<http://www.nxtnt.net>

**resistant media** - Nxt will feature artist led discussions and workshops, providing a space for artists and communities to conceptualise and develop tactical media strategies. National and international participants yet to be confirmed. Nxt is a five day intensive examination and exploration of new media arts, coordinated by QANTM and 24 Hour Art.

<http://www.anat.org.au/resistant-media/>  
 The Resistant Media website and logo designed by melinda.rackham/www.subtle.net



For Further Information, contact ANAT  
 PH: (08) 8231-9037 Email: [anat@anat.org.au](mailto:anat@anat.org.au)

Resistant Media, ART, Perspecta99 and Nxt Multimedia Symposium are supported through the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body.



## The Digital Artstore The Artstore and Research Project

3V Media is developing the Digital Artstore: a distribution outlet for Australian and international digital arts and media work, primarily CD ROM based, but also including DVD, video and other media forms.

The Artstore is part of an Australian Film Commission (AFC) initiative to develop distribution strategies for digital arts and media work. Initial market research is being undertaken by Merryn Carter and Associates to gauge trends in new media distribution and marketing.

The aim of the Digital Artstore project is to provide both online and physical channels for the promotion and distribution of digital work.

The project is to be carried out in collaboration with leading Australian independent bookstores which will provide the exhibition and sales points supported by a website that provides information on the various works and allows online ordering.

The website and the distribution network will be fully operational by December 1999.

Please contact us for details on the Artstore, or for information to assist in distributing work, locally and globally.

3V Media Distribution  
 P.O. Box 849  
 Bondi Junction NSW 2022  
 Sydney Australia

[www.digitalartstore.com](http://www.digitalartstore.com)  
 Tel: 61 2 9281 7955  
 Fax: 61 2 9389 9737



assisted by the Australian Film Commission

**"If new media teaches anything, it is that communal culture is productive. New media, like pop culture, shares its power with group reference. The more the better."**

Ross Gibson\*

## Australia's expanding screen culture

It would be right to say, the tiredness of the metaphor aside, that there has been an explosion of new media activity in Australia, an enormous amount of it online. It's hard to keep up with, hence the importance of *Working the Screen* to help anticipate new works and comprehend the breadth of activity. But explosion is not the right word. In her critical survey of the nurturing and development of new media, Sarah Miller argues that there's been a great deal of teaching, learning, researching and experimenting going on for a very long time, and, despite funding cuts and some curious spending directions, artists have created many significant and innovative works throughout the 90s.

When we sent out messages requesting information from artists all over Australia about their works-in-progress the response was immediate and overwhelming. (It was interesting to read recently that the number of new media submissions for MAAP 99 (Multimedia Art Asia Pacific) quadrupled when compared with last year's figure.) For *Working the Screen*, over half were works online, the rest installations (working from hard drive), CD-ROMs, a DVD-ROM, films and videos. There were also submissions from artists working in performance, spectator-activated installations, public art, dance and sound. Among the creators of the works-in-progress detailed in this liftout were some who once called themselves visual artists but are more likely now to label themselves media artists.

We were unable to contact some artists (overseas, too busy) and some felt that their projects hadn't developed sufficiently to be reported. However, there were enough queries after our deadline passed to suggest we could immediately produce *Working the Screen II*. Jack White, producer of Museum Victoria's Digital Planetarium (Scienceworks Museum, Spotswood) emailed us recently to report that "The new Melbourne Planetarium is currently preparing a series of productions for its opening in September. We are employing 6 local digital artists and a couple of programmers for the job. The new facility is equipped with a 16 metre dome, 3D Star projector, 3 Barco projectors motorised for motion paths, a heap of slide and sfx projectors and six channel surround sound. The visuals are driven through DVMS. Production elements include 2D and 3D animation, multi-layering and all types of compositing, 3D star rendering etc."

We've just received Chunky Move's CD-ROM (reviewed in *RealTime* 32), an Australian dance-first exploring the collaborative creation and performance of the dance work *C.O.R.R.U.P.T.E.D. 2*. It was developed in collaboration with Peter Hennessey and Drome. Sound artist Nigel Helyer is working with Lake DSP in a 12 month partnership to create a 3D audio space with artistic and commercial potential. Justine Cooper, winner of the 1998 National Digital Art Award for *Rapt*, is developing a *Biological Maze*, with ramifications artistic and medical. There are also a number of dance new media projects by Jesse McNicholl, Chrissie Parrott and the new artistic director of Australian Dance Theatre, Garry Stewart, that we hope to follow up soon.



We also received many requests for reviews, given the limited availability of critical responses to new media art works, and even a job description redirected to us from *recode*: "A project between the Song Company and Martin and Peter Wesley-Smith to develop and write a new multi-media work exploring the scientific, ethical, social and political aspects of biogenetics and genetic engineering using the 6 singers of The Song Company and real-time computer processing of sound and images. The project URGENTLY seeks expressions of interest from artists working with video and multimedia wishing to contribute to this project. Further information: Roland Peelman, c/o Eugene Ragghianti [songcompany@flex.com.au](mailto:songcompany@flex.com.au)" Don't hesitate.

We hope that *Working the Screen* excites interest in the range and complexity of new media work in Australia both as part of our rich screen culture but also right across the arts.

Our thanks to the Australian Film Commission, in particular to Kate Ingham and Julie Regan, for initiating *Working the Screen*, and to Brendan Harkin and Thea Butler of Online Australia (The National Office of the Information Economy) for their support.

\* "Spacing the digital", page 4

Cover images left to right, top row: Francesca da Rimini, *Los Dias Y Las Noches De Los Muertos*; Mari Velonaki, *Amor Veneris A*; Norie Neumark/Maria Miranda, *Liver from Dead Centre: the body with organs*; middle row: Kate Richards, *Elementia*; John Tonkin, *A Grand Unified Theory of Self*; Leon Cmielewski, *Dream Kitchen*; bottom row: Sally Pryor, *As I May Write*; Kevin Tham, *Sensory Overload*; Dina Pannoza/Maria Miranda, *Monster Mouth*.

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# Working the Screen

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*Working the Screen* also appears online on <http://www.rttimearts.com/~opencity/>

# Online Australia

## Creating an online future

Online Australia is involved in an astonishing range of initiatives, partnerships, forums and peak events, across business, government and culture. Amongst its cultural partnerships and sponsorships are the following: MAAP (Multimedia Art Asia Pacific), the online multimedia festival emanating from Brisbane in September is supported as one of its peak events. Online Australia hosted Project 1, a one day coming together of arts organisations, web developers and online business (see page 10). It has also declared the Apple-sponsored Fourth National Entertainment Industry Conference (Sydney, August 6 - 7) as The Peak Music Event of Online Australia Year. The National Cultural Festival Online (see page 7) is another cultural event supported by them.

Online Australia Year 1999 is a Commonwealth Government initiative designed to: help Australians succeed online; build Australia's online communities; involve Australians in determining and participating in the nation's online future. Online Australia 1999 comprises a national program of events and activities from March through November 1999 which will focus national attention on information economy developments and issues.

Each month of Online Australia 1999 has a theme, based on key areas identified in the government's Strategic Framework for the Information Economy. From March to November these themes are: Information Economy; Regional and Rural Development; Small and Medium Business; Government Online; Employment Skills and Y2K; Education and Health Online; Culture and Communities; E-commerce; Australia and the Global Economy.

Here is a selection from Online Australia's program for August - September:

August. Education & Health Online; Internet World Australia 99, Sydney, Aug 2 - 4; Telecommunications Online Forum, ACIF, SPAN & Tel-

stra, Sydney, August 4; Fourth National Entertainment Industry Conference, Sydney, August 6 - 7; Royal College of Nursing Expo, Sydney, August 14; DTI & Datacasting: TV's New Dawn, Sydney, August 19; Business/Banking Working in Partnership, Melbourne, Aug 20; Interact 99 Asia Pacific Multimedia Festival, Melbourne, August 20 - Sept 3; Online Australia Agenda Series: Education Online, Sydney, August 26; Health Informatics Summit, Hobart, Aug 29 - 30; Health Services CEO/PECC Forum, Hobart, August 31. Also in August, State Departments E-Health & Telehealth Workshops, Hobart, Perth Darwin, August; and Skills for the Information Economy, National.

September. Culture and Communities: Multimedia Art Asia Pacific Festival 99, Brisbane, Sept 3 - 12; Adult Learners Week: Seniors Online Day, National, September 7; Online Australia Agenda Series: Culture Online, Brisbane, September 9; Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, September - January. Online Australia Agenda Series: Access & Participation, Melbourne, September 21; Business to Business Trade Show, Perth, Sept 21-23; Online Australia—SBS Multicultural News Portal, Online, September 24; Communication Research Forum, Canberra, September 27-28; Community Networking/Networking Communities Summit Ballarat, Sept 29 - 30; Online Field Day, Ballarat, September 29 - 30; The Australian Virtual Centre for Women and the Law, Online, September; Australian Schools Web Challenge Winners Announced, National, September; NOIE IT & T Skills Website launch, Online, September; Online Australia National Cultural Festival Online (see page 19)

Online Australia is coordinated by The National Office for the Information Economy within The Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

For more information visit:  
[www.onlineaustralia.net.au](http://www.onlineaustralia.net.au)

## Los Dias Y Las Noches De Los Muertos

Francesca da Rimini with Los Fantasmos

*we were a cipher in the big accounts of capital...the gigantic market of maximum irrationality that trades in dignities Zapatista text*

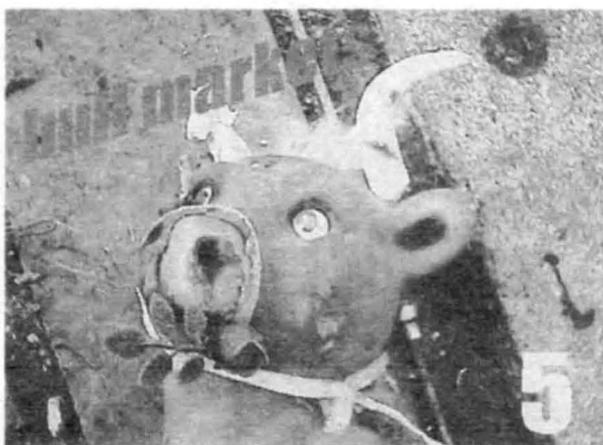
*Los Dias Y Las Noches De Los Muertos* (The Days And Nights Of The Dead); a collaborative online project—Adelaide/New York/Rome/Chiapas. A ghost work of counter-memories, opening thresholds of impossibilities outside of pan-capitalism. A drifting carnival of souls which gathers together the spectres of late capitalism, soft conspiracies, forgotten phantoms and digital Zapatismo.

More cultural and aesthetic than technical, as the technology is relatively simple—HTML code, framesets, streaming audio, CUseme. Cultural—developing and looking after relationships amongst participating ghosts scattered over 3 continents. Aesthetic—striving towards the creation of a new genre, neither a poem nor a film but something inbetween.

Most of my work happens online—negotiated email relationships, online communities, ghost girls and riverboys, narrative architectures. With Marco Dereris, recently completed a commissioned work acid test for the Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisberg, Germany. Received a Fellowship from the New Media Arts Fund of the Australia Council for *soft accidents*, an exploration of some relationships between quantum physics and Indigenous knowledge systems. All online projects linked to [autonomous.org/~gashgirl](http://autonomous.org/~gashgirl)

[www.thing.net/~dollyoko/LOSDIAS/INDEX.HTML](http://www.thing.net/~dollyoko/LOSDIAS/INDEX.HTML)

VACF (Visual Arts/Craft Fund), Australia Council.



## Dream Kitchen

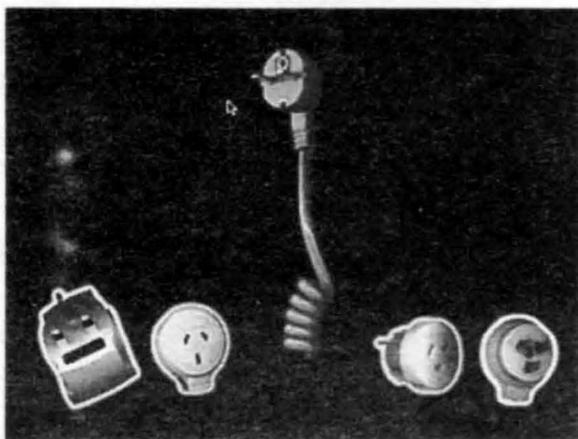
Leon Cmielewski

*Dream Kitchen* is an interactive installation. The interactive animation incorporates both 3D and stop motion techniques. It starts in an antiseptically clean "Mr Sheen" kitchen and then takes us to those areas where the moral cleansers can't reach. Beneath the surface runs a parallel interior zone populated with inspired objects. This subterranean zone could be interpreted in many ways: a catalogue of dread, a cabinet of memories, an archive of fantasies.

The challenge in this project has been to keep the freedom and directness of stop motion film animation while working within a computer interactive framework. Director/animation, Leon Cmielewski; producer: Josephine Starrs; programmer, Adam Hinshaw; sound designer, Panos Courous.

Leon Cmielewski and Josephine Starrs are artists whose work includes the new media installations *User Unfriendly Interface* and *Diagnostic Tools for the New Millennium*. Both separately and together they have produced work in various media which has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

Co-production with the Banff Centre, Canada. Australian Film Commission. Completion October 1999.



## A Grand Unified Theory of Self

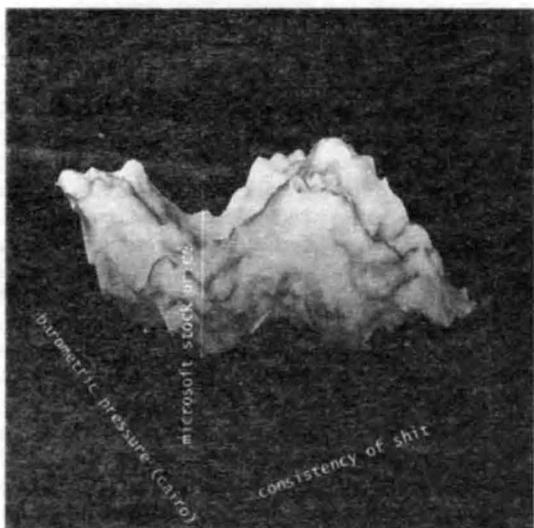
John Tonkin

*A Grand Unified Theory of Self* is a study of complexity theory. Interactive data analysis and visualisation tools will correlate personal details (amount of sleep, consistency of faeces, heart rate at moment of orgasm) with global indicators harvested from the web (Microsoft's stock index, barometric pressure in Cairo).

I write software using languages such as C++ and Java. For this project I will need to develop Java-based data storage, analysis, charting and visualisation software. This will draw from source code and reference material available on the web, and involve consultation with research scientists from the Supercomputing Lab, ANU. The medium will be an interactive (Java based) online website but will also be exhibited as a more technically sophisticated installation with realtime 3D graphics and live data feeds.

John Tonkin began making computer animation in 1985. Animations include *air*, *water parts 1, 2 & 3* (1993-95) and *these are the days* (1994). *meniscus* (1995-99) is a series of works exploring ideas relating to subjectivity, scientific belief systems and the body (<http://207.225.33.116/meniscus>).

The project is the major component of John Tonkin's Australia Council New Media Arts Fund Fellowship. Completion mid 2001.



*A Grand Unified Theory of Self (mock up)*

## Spacing the digital

Alex Hutchinson talks venues with media artist and Cinemedia Platform 1.0 curator Ross Gibson

The urge to write this article as some kind of hyper-text is almost overpowering. Just imagine: I could lay it out in a variety of fonts. I could zig-zag the text across the page. I could get a photo of Ross Gibson, creative director of the major exhibition space in the new Cinemedia complex in Federation Square, and I could colour his face with the reflected light from a monitor, smother it with a thousand lines of Zeros and Ones. We could all look ever so new and exciting.

But that's not the point. At least Gibson doesn't think so, and it's a philosophy he wants to apply to his curatorship of the digital culture focused Platform 1.0 Gallery in Federation Square. While the foundations of the complex are currently being pile driven, eventually the entire basement will be a massive underground space dedicated to new media and operating under the overall definition of the "history of moving image culture."

It is an approach which hopes to avoid two popular new media gallery cliches. 1) The Staple Gun Technique: in which a 'new' collection is attached with duct tape to the fringe of an existing exhibition or gallery space, just to prove that the curator is aware that new media does exist. 2) The New for the sake of New Technique: in which an application is made for funding or space to put together an exhibition of 'new' work, and once the project is given the green light the curator feels it necessary (considering his/her 'new media' brief) to exhibit only that work which screams out how new and fresh it is.

And while the official opening of the project is not until May 2001, Gibson has already begun negotiations with international artists and is assembling a wish list of local talent. The aim is to create an ongoing environment for art. The building itself is a synthesizer, offering access to shared resources worldwide through the web, and a chance on the floors above Platform 1.0 for seminars, workshops and public search and research facilities. It aims to be the performance of exhibited culture in time, something traditional galleries have never done well. This gallery is aiming to refigure itself in real time and although Gibson shies away from the concept of creating interactivity for its own sake, he wants to "create a situation in which production, interpretation and examination occur simultaneously."

More interestingly, Gibson wants to give digital culture an historical context, acknowledging that even the newest work does not exist in a vacuum. One of his primary concerns is to create an historical canon for the gallery, a concept which is alien to the more traditional arts for several reasons. Firstly because new media is often not accorded any sense of history—seen instead as a kind of artistic pimple which bursts onto the scene from nowhere, says a whole lot of irrelevant things very loudly before disappearing back into irrelevance—and secondly, because it is an impossible task for virtually any other medium. A gallery of physical culture may be able to acknowledge the history of its medium, but it cannot put it on display. Says Gibson: "The museuming of digital culture is challenging the curators of physical culture who have often seen their task as limiting the public's access to great works of art, because every time you allow people access to them, the more dangerous it becomes. Not only physically, but intellectually. Repetition devalues the work."

This is in striking opposition to digital culture, which is often born of repetition, which accepts mass production as one of its strongest points. One of the greatest things about new media Gibson says is its "non-exclusive behaviour." It is completely feasible to gather a collection of the best digital culture has to offer because the concept of a facsimile or copy does not apply. This is especially important with an art form which already occupies a tenuous position in the eyes of the general public. It is important, Gibson stresses, to "make sure the stuff you show is cogent...people's opinions are low enough as it is."

This sense of inclusiveness extends beyond the work itself, to the relationship of the gallery with other groups. Although Cinemedia's emphasis will be its own presentations, Gibson wants to emphasise its continuing commitment to maintaining and strengthening its associations with other organizations. "If new media teaches anything, it is that

communal culture is productive. New media, like pop culture, shares its power with group reference. The more the better."

In terms of content, Platform 1.0 has no specific brief. The aim is "not to fit work to a label, but to label the work after the fact." Nevertheless, several themes are already becoming apparent: the representation of the urban environment, of ecological systems, of surveillance and detection exist already in the work produced and will be represented in the final line-up of creators and works. However, although what exactly this work will be and how it will be presented is still a grey area this far out from the launch date, even now two issues seem particularly important: the transience of much digital culture (its location on the edge of a specific time-frame reference point to maintain its relevance) and the removal of much of the work from its native habitat (taking it from the computer screen in somebody's bedroom and essentially hanging it on a wall). How will the gallery manage to push itself as a permanent collection of the best digital culture has to offer if the whole concept is by definition fluid? And how will the space manage to maintain the integrity of work designed for intimate, close-quarters experience in a room the size of an aircraft hangar?

In an effort to circumvent the first issue, Platform 1.0 aims for a high turn-over of work, a space in a continual state of metamorphosis. Also, the existence of lightning fast electronic delivery systems and the storage capacity of the modern computer means that work can be changed, moved and stored at high speeds. A digital gallery can display and keep work in a far more efficient manner than a traditional gallery. It has the ability to stay much closer to the pulse. Apparent transience is not necessarily a weakness either: it is also its greatest strength, and the notion of disposable or mass produced work does not lessen its value as work which can be re-analysed and re-experienced.

The second issue is more difficult. Digital media, especially on-line works, are designed as highly personal objects to be displayed/experienced on a 15-17 inch monitor in someone's bedroom or office. It would be impossible to recreate this environment in a public space, if only because you can't walk around it naked at 3am with a cup of Milo and believe it or not, this does affect the work. Where other art forms have organised, institutionalised delivery systems, where painters work to be hung and writers to be bound, digital artists can find themselves refigured by delivery systems, by the setup of end-users' computer systems, by the vastly different types of environment in which their work is eventually viewed.

This is of course not true of all digital media art—an incredibly diverse form—but is an example of just one of the challenges of presenting it. And it is a challenge which Platform 1.0 aims to counteract using the environment itself. In the design phase the space is an underground complex, a dark space, which will be built and re-built to accommodate the needs of each work on a case by case basis. I like to imagine it as resembling the simulated natural habitats at modern zoos as compared to the cement cubicles of yesteryear.

In fact this re-presentation of work in a slightly different context can be seen not only as the gallery's greatest challenge, but also its greatest asset. It could be argued that what makes Platform 1.0 so exciting is that it will be a dedicated display of digital art not shoe-horned into a space beside other art forms. Galleries, like museums, are laced with value judgements. From their architecture down they are designed to demonstrate the worth of the objects they display. The fact that Platform 1.0 is also a large, government funded project which aims to present as 'worthwhile' something the general public might have its doubts about, and to allow a level of interactivity not available in other galleries, provides the space with a rare opportunity.

Where traditional galleries provide end points, a point at which people can look back at 'great' art and acknowledge its historical importance, Platform 1.0 could be an opportunity to acknowledge the here and now of digital art, to see it as close to its time of production as possible. A chance to put your feet in the blocks, see art in process, and maybe even start running yourself.

# Media arts and online culture: enter or escape?

Jeffrey Cook says it's time to look at defragmenting online arts distribution

Wilson: But what shall we dream of when everything becomes visible?

Virilio: We'll dream of being blind.

Louise Wilson, interview with Paul Virilio, "Cyberwar, God, and Television", in Kroker, Arthur, and Marilouise (eds), *Digital Delirium*, St Martin's, NY, 1997.

Perhaps too much has already been claimed for the benefits that new media technologies, the web and internet bring to the arts, and the media arts in particular. But a maturing audience, a growing "catalogue" of online work and resources, and the burgeoning of partially or wholly web-based media arts practitioners are gradually creating a lively and diverse online media arts culture.

And this in spite of the well-documented failings of the computer-based communications media of the internet and its colourful and noisy cousin, the web. This online culture is the seed bed for many of the most exciting developments in the media arts—the ways they're practised, received, and ultimately, experienced or lived within a particular culture by its citizens. But it is still early days for this new form of cultural expression.

The digital realm's ubiquitous influence extends to many media and arts practices and forms allowing the artist to create, manipulate and present work in new ways, and the audience to view and interact with work and exhibitions from anywhere on the globe. The web also presents many opportunities for the media artist and curator to distribute their works or collections widely and to new audiences.

The key change here is the aggregation, in potentially many new ways, of the relatively marginal and fragmented communities of artists and their audiences through the internet. **This effect of integrating previously dis-integrated audiences, combined with technologies that enhance audience/viewer engagement and feedback (interactivity) may, in the end, have a far greater impact on the media arts than that of the powerful new technologies of media creation and presentation.** Importantly, these different aspects are interdependent and need to be considered as a whole, both for the benefits, and the problems, they bring with them. However, there is currently a lack of knowledge about new distribution channels and the likely future of new media forms.

The recognition of this lack of knowledge has had a significant effect on Australian media arts culture by highlighting the need for government arts funding bodies to address the "downstream" of the production process, arts distribution, with the same commitment they have shown to the "upstream" of the process.

The Australia Council, the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA), the Australian Film Commission and Cinemedia, among others, have begun to grapple with the intricacies of global distribution assisted by the internet by supporting a range of media arts resource organisations, sites and marketing projects.

The National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE) also has a program, Online Australia Year, to catalyse online culture, with aims that include the idea that, "artists need to be recognised as innovative contributors to the information economy. Encouraging links between cultural institutions, cultural workers and commercial content producers will help to increase the variety and quality of digital content, improve Australia's visibility in the global online environment."

But the internet is a vast and restless space and there are many issues that need to be taken into account in addressing distribution and access, such as:

1. The greatest issue that faces the artist, curator or arts organisations for media arts practice and culture is a simple one: access to sufficient bandwidth and resources, including sufficient knowledge of distribution and new technologies to make the right strategic and planning choices that will enhance their creativity, career and audience.

2. 'Version 1.0' of the internet is about to become so-called 'Version 2.0.' Version 2.0 will not only converge media and audiences, it will also diverge into different kinds of broad and narrow band access with different prices, platforms and audiences—just as free and pay television have become two different domains with different audiences and media forms. The low capacity internet we use today could be overshadowed or marginalised by high speed, high capacity networks that only paying subscribers can access, such as Telstra's Big Pond. (For a rather technical but very interesting overview see the review on Ester Dyson's site at [www.edventure.com/release1.cable.html](http://www.edventure.com/release1.cable.html))

3. To address this fragmentation of audiences as internet and other delivery platforms diverge, and failing government intervention to ensure a proportion of bandwidth and access is made available for cultural use, **artists and others participating in media arts cultures online must develop online audience development and maintenance skills, or plan to work with like-minded public organisations and private companies to achieve these objectives—standing alone will no longer work, except for the biggest players.**

4. To address the fragmentation of Australia's online culture into myriad directories and independent sites (mimicking the competitive environment fostered by competitive funding policies of government support bodies), cluster or so-called cultural portal sites and strategies need to be established that bring together organisations in larger online domains that can attract sufficient audiences to gain sponsorship and support.

Visitors, customers, users or audiences come to a website primarily because of quality, innovative, unique and engaging 'content'—not to save or make money, but to have a unique and 'special' experience, something artists and curators understand well, utilising theatrical and 'entertaining' or absorbing elements that are similar to those used in mass-market or more 'popular' forms. However, and most importantly, this 'experience' is provided in unique ways that are unlike those used by purely commercial websites.

As Stephen Ellis said recently in *The Australian* (15/5/99), "...brand and reputation [read identity, uniqueness and quality] may be more important on the Internet than in the [physical] world, since buyers and sellers [read the arts and their audiences] are so emphatically separated."

Uniqueness is the media arts' greatest resource, and used wisely and well, will ensure a future for media arts online by achieving a respect and position with audiences, government and sponsors that guarantees them a vital place in the new distribution networks, and the skills and resources to maintain this position.

Visit our RealTime website for a list of resource sites, directories and relevant international sites attached to this article. [www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/](http://www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/)

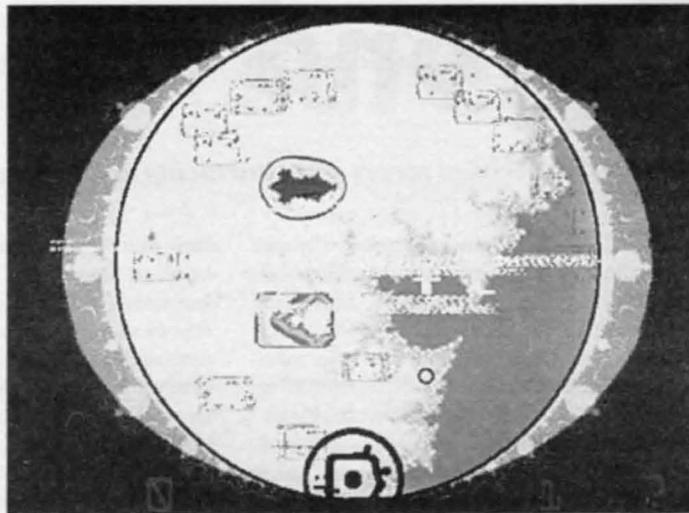
In terms of new areas for distribution, two of the more comprehensive reports are Stephen Hall's 1997 "Performing Arts Multimedia Library: Marketing Study" for the New Media Section of DCITA (then DoCA), part of a collaborative project with Cinemedia (see [www.cinemedia.net/PAML/](http://www.cinemedia.net/PAML/)); and the 1997 AFC report *Other Spaces* by Rachel Dixon ([www.afc.gov.au/](http://www.afc.gov.au/)); to order look under "resources" and then use the search engine to find 'Other Spaces.'

Jeffrey Cook is a director of 3V, an electronic production and publishing company. He is also a researcher and writer on media futures, an independent mediamaker and is currently undertaking postgraduate studies for a Research Masters in Art Theory at College of Fine Arts, UNSW, in digital media arts.

## Muto

Kathryn Mew

*Muto* is a hyperreal planet, a hybrid of the digital and the organic. Gameplay is highly experimental, using a three dimensional navigation system, textless interface and interactive themes of creation, mutation and destruction. The user is invited to explore *Muto's* simulated environments. Red represents corporeal, an environment of breathing, breeding tissue. Green represents earth, a habitat of fertile soil, and flourishing plant life. Blue represents water and the atmosphere. Black represents a world of creation on the smallest of organic molecular levels. White represents an opposing pole of digital reproduction.



*Muto*, a CD-ROM, began as a post-graduate project (RMIT). The major challenges have been to push the capabilities of the commercially available software (Macromedia Director) to match my vision, and to keep up with new versions of the product as the deadline blows out. Holding down full-time employment and/or freelancing within the multimedia industry during the production process has also been difficult for final completion of the project. Although the work is not yet completed, I have managed to have it exhibited in several national and international multimedia exhibitions (also a lot of work in itself), which helps drive me toward completion.

Kathryn Mew is a Melbourne-based designer. Her main areas of research include interface design, experimental virtual environments and digital culture. Her work ranges from websites to live theatre video support, to CD-ROMs and has appeared in Kabaret Internet in both Munich and Cologne, the Downloading Downunder exhibition in Amsterdam, the Next Wave Festival in Melbourne, dLux Media Arts' *D.art 99* and the ARS Electronica *Life Science* exhibition Linz, Austria.

Completion December 1999. Australian Film Commission.

## intelligence agency

Julianne Pierce

An online portal, video and performance project currently in development, *intelligence agency* is an interactive media project, a host site for information corruption and counter-intelligence. The participants are female identities who (under)mine data, capital and IT economy. Currently acting as a research and transmission hub, *intelligence agency* is a contact point for identities wishing to continue their highly visible activities by remaining totally anonymous.

Julianne Pierce is an interactive media producer, artist and curator, a founding member of the collaborative computer art group VNS Matrix, and has presented work at international exhibitions and conferences including ISEA and Ars Electronica. In 1997, she was a co-ordinator of the 1st Cyberfeminist International (Hybrid Workspace) at Documenta X in Germany. She is currently producing an interactive media project *Uncle Bill* with sound artist Debra Petrovitch; developing the Digital Artstore distribution project with Jeffrey Cook (3V Media). She is also part-time Project Co-ordinator at The Performance Space, Sydney and is a Board member of the Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) and Artspace.

[www.intelligenceagency.org](http://www.intelligenceagency.org) New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council

## Elementia

Kate Richards

The interactive CD-ROM *Elementia* is an allegory for our obsessive search to reconcile matter and spirit. The tale unfolds through Anax Heli's private collection of Elementian maps: cartographs bizarre and eerie, urbane and greedy, of metal and stone and skin and luxite. *Elementia* is an experience inspired by Bakhtin's chronotope: "A time/space, a fictional setting, where time thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible."



Interactive multimedia is especially demanding in its conception as both "architectural" space and time-based media. The artist needs to create discrete sequences that can connect to multiple others, and yet are integral to an overall scheme. Thinking in this modular way is easier than developing rigorous concepts and themes across linear media, and yet more difficult if one doesn't want to create a mere patchwork. Once this is solved, "process" is still fairly uncharted terrain. We have a way to go before art IMM will have the well-tested production and technical processes of linear media.

Director/producer, Kate Richards; programmer, Ryan Sabir; designers, Chris Caines, David Lawford, Ayca Smith.

Kate Richards is a multimedia artist and producer, and an Honorary Research Fellow in New Media at University of Technology, Sydney. Current projects also include: *Life After Wartime* (CD-ROM), as producer, with writer/director Ross Gibson.

Completion December 1999. Australian Film Commission.

# Beyond techno-evangelism—

Sarah Miller's critical survey of the nurturing and promotion of Australian new media arts—funding, politics, screen culture organisations

Keating's Labor Government launched *Creative Nation*, Australia's first ever national arts and cultural policy document, in late 1994. If, as many of you will recall, it did not seem to offer much to the arts community per se, it did offer salvation of a sort, should artists be willing to take up the challenge of the so called 'new technologies.' *Creative Nation* seemed to suggest that Australia's financial and cultural redemption lay in the development of its very own IMM industry. Artists in particular were to find a new heaven on earth through a spectacular immersion in the benefits of digital technologies—particularly CD-ROM. Not only would they have the opportunity to work as part of a team, where they—the artist, now known as the 'content provider'—would work alongside other team members (programmers, producers etc) in perfect harmony—they would also by reason of their newly acquired skills achieve financial independence even wealth, once liberated from their previously parasitical existence as swollen ticks on the body of the Australian tax payer. CD-ROM was the chosen technology sitting at the right hand of Bill Gates, our father almighty, who unfortunately seemed to prefer his left hand on which sitteth Netscape, e-commerce and a whole raft of multimedia monopolies.

## Do I need to point out that such assumptions begged a number of questions?

Anyway, *Creative Nation* established a number of initiatives in order to jump start the development of an IMM industry in Australia. Strangely, or so it seemed to me given that it was ostensibly an 'arts and cultural policy', such initiatives ignored the reasonably extensive and surprisingly effective, if poorly resourced infrastructure already in place, preferring to establish a series of entirely new organisations. These included CMCs (cooperative multimedia centres), CRCs (cooperative research centres) and initiatives such as AMIA (Australian Multimedia Industry Association), not to mention projects such as the *Australia on CD-ROM* series. Such initiatives were extremely well funded (comparatively speaking) and, apparently, very ambitious. The CMCs, for example, were established not only to act as a resource for the Arts and Culture, Education and Training, Research and Development and Business and Industry sectors; they would also create a previously unimagined and brave new convergence between these differing areas of endeavour. Such a responsibility could not of course be left to the screen culture sector because no-one from business would ever take them seriously. After all, all they did was fulfil their objectives effectively on really, really small budgets. Not one screen culture organisation ever lost hundreds of thousands of dollars on a project so what was the point in entrusting anything to them? Oh, and of course there was the matter of ideology...

## Not that I'm cynical or anything.

So the CMC, the CRC, AMIA and a few other things were not so much born as artificially induced and, as with all contemporary organisations, were genetically modified to ensure that they remained ideology free. They had money, lots of rhetoric and more agendas than you could poke a stick at, and they started, in their various ways, to do stuff—the nature and effectiveness of which has yet to be critically assessed.

Of course a few other things had already been happening for quite some time and it was these things that government seemed incapable of adding into the equation. Artists for instance. Despite countless expensive consultancies, conferences, information workshops etc government seemed remarkably unwilling to acknowledge, and therefore take advantage of, the considerable body of knowledge already developed by artists and service, producing and presenting organisations nationally. For reasons that remain unclear,

their attention was focused not on the artists and organisations already working with—or even interested in working with—technologies of various kinds but on those who were not. Inordinate amounts of time and money went into persuading painters, sculptors, dancers and actors that their energies would be far better redirected into the MM industry. Those in the know were increasingly sceptical of the rhetoric of digital utopias. Those who weren't interested became increasingly defensive, even technophobic, and who can blame them.

And yet the very linkages and convergences that government was so intent upon developing were already in process even if their ability to grow themselves was somewhat hampered by the lack of resources in the area. **The rhetoric of innovation so fostered by government was equalled only by their failure to recognise the innovative processes already employed by individuals and organisations nationally, not to mention their achievements both nationally and internationally in the art/technology arena.** The fact that these were the achievements of artists and organisations concerned as much with the critical as well as the creative and social application of technologies would appear to have been absolutely detrimental in terms of the way they were perceived by government whose priority remained narrowly industry focused. That there have been changes and ongoing development throughout the screen culture sector could not be denied, but it remains disheartening to imagine how much more might have been achieved had their abilities and achievements been recognised and fostered.

## So much for content.

Of course there was money in *Creative Nation*—LOTS of money, but that money primarily went to the MM Industry. This might not have been so galling except for the fact that they called it cultural money and, for the most part, it wasn't used for cultural purposes. Exacerbating this situation was the fact that such monies were administered not by independent statutory authorities such as the Australian Film Commission (AFC) or the Australia Council, nor even the then relatively newly formed Department of Communications and the Arts (DOCA) but, in the case of the CMCs, by the Department of Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). While the existence of CMCs has been guaranteed with annual funding of \$1.375 million for a period of up to 8 years—after which time it is assumed that they will be financially independent—levels of accountability, transparency of process etc are incredibly lacking, particularly when compared to other publicly funded areas of endeavour, and this despite a comprehensive review commissioned by DEETYA and undertaken by Deloitte in 1998.

## There is no level playing field.

Five years after *Creative Nation*, it is clear that there are still very few opportunities for artists to access resources or equipment through the CMCs (for instance) and typically, if any money does become available it is only because of a successful application to the AFC or the Australia Council. In fact Ngapartji (SA) and Imago (WA) are the only CMCs which have had any pretensions to providing some kind of ongoing support to the arts. While terms like 'innovation', 'research and development' and, less frequently these days, 'content provider' are tossed blithely about, there is not much indication that the rhetoric comes anywhere near being matched by resources. The arts, in this context, are utterly disposable.

## So much for convergence.

Nevertheless, and against the odds, the screen culture resource, presenting and project based

organisations have continued to grow and develop in sophistication and levels of activity, but only because of reallocations of existing arts funding rather than additional funds going to 'content providers.' **The strength of project-based organisations lies in their ability to stretch a buck further than it could be imagined a buck could be stretched, their ability to collaborate both within and without the sector, their innovative programming, access to training and equipment and the provision of a critical context that (as ANAT describes it) is "beyond the commercially driven techno-evangelistic hype."**

## Aaah but they do it because they love it and that after all is the important thing or maybe that should read the 'exploitable' thing!

## The ANAT story

Thinking about those organisations for whom convergence has been a reality, it would be impossible to overlook the Australian Network for Art & Technology. ANAT was established in Adelaide in 1985 as a national body to advocate, promote and support the arts and artists in the interaction between art, science and technology and it has done so through a mix of programs encompassing education and training, research and development, creating opportunities for critical debate and exhibition. Since its inception, ANAT has been at the forefront of the movement to position artists as active participants in the 'information age.' Possibly their most important initiative has been the annual summer schools established to provide intense training opportunities for artists wishing to develop or extend their skills in different areas. Hard to think of a significant artist exploiting technology today (although of course there are a few) who hasn't undertaken or at least taught in one of these summer schools and if we consider that anything between 14 - 20 artists have participated in these schools every year for 10 years, then their cumulative impact must be understood as considerable. If we further consider that the ANAT model of "deep immersion" has been adopted by other organisations, then their influence must be seen as even more far reaching.

ANAT chipped away at the margins for years, steadfastly clinging to a belief that relationships between art, science and technology were not only desirable but essential. Things really did change for ANAT following *Creative Nation*, however you'd have to say that such change came about only because of the strength of their then newly appointed director and committed advocate, Amanda McDonald Crowley, seizing the moment as it were, rather than any particular perspicacity on the part of government. Nevertheless, with the rhetoric of the federal government (albeit unwittingly) behind them, ANAT was well placed to argue its case as a national body with the expertise to push the parameters further, at least within the offices of the Australia Council. So whilst ANAT's budget (encompassing both infrastructure and projects) has tripled over the past 3 years from \$183K to \$634K (please note that this amount is still less than half that available to a CMC annually, and there are six CMCs nationally), such funds come from monies already dedicated to arts and cultural programs. ANAT's primary source of funding is the New Media Arts Fund of the Australia Council with some funds coming from the AFC and an even tinier bit from the states.

According to McDonald Crowley, perhaps what has been most important about ANAT is its long term vision on the one hand—the cumulative effect of initiatives such as the summer school programs—and on the other, the process-oriented nature of its programs. Residencies, master

classes, conferences and so on are all about providing artists with the space (both conceptual and actual), as well as the money to develop ideas as well as providing access to equipment. While there are of course outcomes, the critical issue is that ANAT provides space and opportunity for 'pure' research. Of course the difference between a national arts driven initiative such as ANAT and a CMC is that ANAT is concerned to "work with artists who are not only pushing the boundaries of the technology but are conceptually engaged with its impact."

## Research and artist development

What is not happening, according to McDonald Crowley, "is any acknowledgment that supporting artists is a worthwhile thing across the board—the problem with 'process' being that outcomes are difficult to predict. One-off endeavours are fine as far as they go but for meaningful change to take place then we do have to talk long-term rather than short-term strategies. This is as true for artists working in the science sector as it has been for the summer schools." She is equally concerned that even "in the glibbest of economically rational language, there be some acknowledgment that a tiny investment in R&D has long-term implications not only for the arts, but long term across a wide range of industries."

From an arts perspective, this may not be the primary benefit but it's certainly a secondary one. Who knows, for instance, where the work on *Tissue Culture & Art*—an ongoing research project undertaken by Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr, recently presented at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—might lead; or David Rogers' current work with seismologists at the Australian Geographic Scientific Organisation.

Having said that, McDonald Crowley is also aware of the artists we've lost because of inadequate financial support or even understanding of the work undertaken. **We have no equivalent to ZKM, the centre for art and media technology at Karlsruhe in Germany (to name just one international example), where under one roof, the fields of research, development, collection and presentation are carried out.** Whilst McDonald Crowley acknowledges that this is true for much contemporary art practice, she does feel that the situation is extreme in the media arts. "Take ZKM where a number of Australian artists are represented in their collections including Jeffrey Shaw, Simon Biggs, Peter Callas, Simon Penny and Jill Scott. In Penny's case, it is interesting to note that whilst he is now a Professor of Robotics at Carnegie Mellon in the US, in Australia he's never shown anywhere other than an artist-run space." She notes also the experience of practitioners such as Kate Rich and Natalie Jeremijenko—the Bureau of Inverse Technology—now based in NYC.

How might we also begin to assess the outcomes of ANAT's first National Indigenous Summer School currently taking place in Darwin (where I guess it's summer all year round) in collaboration with the Visual Arts School at the Northern Territory University? Coordinated by artist, curator and writer Brenda Croft (Gurindji), the school is being tutored by a number of Indigenous artists including Rea (Gamileroi/Wailwan) and Cameron Goold (Wiradjuri) from Indiginet, an Aboriginal web design company. For this inaugural project, ANAT have also invited Skawanati Tricia Fragnito (Mohawk, First Nations, Canada), an artist and curator who has developed web projects for Nation to Nation, a First Nations Artists Collective, and has specialised in developing innovative multi-user online environments using Palace softwares.

Having said that, it's only fair that I also acknowledge the success of *Online Ontrack*, Imago Multimedia Centre's first Indigenous Summer School

# who's working the screen?

held in Perth earlier this year. It was conceived and coordinated by Rick Mason, Imago's Arts Program Manager (at least Imago has an Arts Program Manager) and tutored by Francesca da Rimini, Malcolm Riddoch and Josephine Wilson. Just goes to show that CMC's aren't all bad.

## Experimenta, dLux and the screen culture resource organisations

While ANAT is a national organisation with projects taking place all over Australia, four states at least have dedicated screen culture resource organisations (SCRO's) which historically have provided production facilities (often at the low end) to myriad practitioners working in film, video and increasingly, of course, digital technologies. These are organisations typically funded by the Australian Film Commission usually in association with some form of state funding. **Open Channel in Melbourne, The Film & Television Institute (FTI) in Fremantle, Media Resource Centre (MRC) in Adelaide and Metro Screen in Sydney have been the backbone of the screen culture sector, providing not only technical facilities and access to equipment and training, exhibition and screenings but importantly a community of practitioners, producers and administrators whose expertise and commitment across a diverse spectrum of media practices is undisputed.**

Of crucial importance also are organisations such as dLux media arts in Sydney and Experimenta Media Arts in Melbourne that have created an essential creative and intellectual context for the commissioning and presentation of media works, moving historically from an emphasis on film (primarily Super 8 and 16mm), to encompass video (both as tape and installation), performance, installation, sound arts and digitally generated media. While both organisations also provide support for artists through advocacy and other services, it is their commitment to a range of possibilities for artists to present work that has been so vital to Australian screen culture.

It is fascinating to look at the range of programs currently offered by both dLux and Experimenta. Impressive has been dLux's commitment to mature artists such as Stelarc and Peter Callas with whom Director, Alessio Cavallaro has worked intensively to ensure that their work can be seen both in an historical context and in terms of their current practice. **With new media it is too easy (particularly for government) to assume that the running is made only by the young and emerging and that there is no history. As in other areas of interdisciplinary practice, it is more appropriate to describe media arts as having multiple histories.**

Consequently, events such as the three part program, *Initialising History*, focussing on the art and curatorial practice of Peter Callas, are extraordinarily important in addressing an astonishing gap in the records of Australian art practice. *Initialising History* has already been shown at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA), the Australian Centre for Contemporary Arts (ACCA) in Melbourne, and the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) in Canberra. This is indicative of the ways that not only contemporary arts organisations enter into the mix but suggests precisely the kind of art that our major collecting institutions should be purchasing. dLux has provided many important opportunities for emerging digital artists—most recently through the *D.art* initiative (also touring nationally)—while *futureScreen* investigates the possible directions of screen arts via symposium, screening, installation and performance programs.

Experimenta Media Arts' Artistic Director, Keely Macarow, is currently consumed by a passion to explore the social and political implications of digital technologies, something that is reflected in Experimenta's ongoing program of forums where topics range from "Democracy and the Digital Domain", which looks at DIY media activism in relation to information technology paradigms of power, to the Cyberbully theme in the next online issue of *Mesh*. "Simulation Culture", which will be undertaken in collaboration with Open Channel as part of the 1999 Melbourne International Festival of the Arts, looks at the hot topic of defence and information provision strategies of all sides of the Balkan War. Their *Fusion* project looks at innovative performance projects that incorporate a fusion of technologies and attitude.

## How to keep in touch

There is so much going on that it is impossible to come to terms with the extent and breadth of activity in one article. The new publication, *digital australia 1999*, (AFC publication produced by Sue McCauley on behalf of Experimenta Media Arts) is one current source of information. An incredibly important resource is the *screenarts* initiative ([www.screenarts.net.au](http://www.screenarts.net.au)). Funded by the Australian Film Commission, *screenarts* was developed by ANAT in association with the Media Resource Centre, Adelaide and dLux media arts in Sydney. The directory promotes Australian screen based exhibitions online and assists in the development of informed and critical debate for art and technology in Australia. There are currently listings for around 75 artists and a number of exhibitions. If you haven't registered your project or exhibition, then do it now. Another current project is "Contact: Unstable Fields of Power" ([www.curtin.edu.au/curtin/dept/art/ITBX](http://www.curtin.edu.au/curtin/dept/art/ITBX)) which set out to explore the internet as a site of exchange and collaboration

between artists from Australia and Indonesia. This project, underway since October 1998, is just one of the projects that suggests, yet again, the power and persistence of artmaking that is content driven, inclusive and both socially and politically concerned. There are many many others. (See the AFC's Digital Artstore p2. Eds)

## Critical funding

At this point, it is perhaps important to note just how important the Australian Film Commission and the New Media Arts Fund of the Australia Council have been in their maintenance of ongoing support for artists and organisations. While constant restructures, funding cuts, small budgets and a creeping conservatism have dogged them, their efforts on behalf of the sector have been considerable. The AFC in particular has been in an ongoing state of crisis with, once again, the big guns of drama-based feature filmmaking putting pressure on funds available for the Industry and Cultural Development branch. This can only be seen as tragic and short sighted. While the funding of artists' projects and support for infrastructure has been critical, it is also important to note the role of the New Media Arts Fund Fellowships which in a few short years have not only provided an important level of support for practitioners in new media and hybrid arts practice but also an acknowledgment of the extraordinary contribution made by some of our more important—and often previously unrecognised—practitioners.

While historically the screen culture sector has been supported by the Australian Film Commission and the contemporary arts sector by the Visual Arts/Craft Fund and more recently the New Media Arts Fund of the Australia Council,

the distinction has always been an uneasy one with many artists and organisations crossing borders that were never too clearly defined in the first place. It tends to be a matter of historical precedent. Should video artists such as Peter Callas, John Gillies and John Conomos be funded as visual artists working with video or as video artists exhibiting in a gallery environment? How do you deal with artists such as Lyndal Jones, Derek Kreckler, Joyce Hinterding, Anna Sabiel and Company in Space for whom various media as well as the physical and temporal space of installation and/or performance could see them equally functioning as visual, performance or new media artists? Does it matter? I don't think so. What does matter is that however they are defined, the hundreds of artists working in the area contribute to a creative and critical confrontation with the technological revolution. What the future holds, who knows, but as for what is needed—well Amanda McDonald Crowley suggested that "bucket loads of money and a heap more energy would do the trick!" I couldn't argue with that.

*Sarah Miller is Director of the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA). She was a founding member of the Australia Council's Hybrid Arts Committee (now the New Media Arts Fund) and has recently retired after five years as a Director of Imago Multimedia Centre, the Perth-based CMC.*

## The distribution challenge

### The Digital Artstore Jeffrey Cook and Julianne Pierce

3V Media is developing the Digital Artstore: a distribution outlet for Australian and international digital arts and media work, primarily CD-ROM based, but also including DVD, video and other media forms. The aim of the Digital Artstore project is to provide specialised online and physical channels for the promotion and distribution of digital arts and media work, including work funded by the AFC, Australia Council and other work distributed by other local and overseas organisations and artists. The project is to be carried out in collaboration with leading Australian independent book stores which will provide the physical exhibition and sales points supported by special e-commerce websites.

We are also currently seeking work for the Digital Artstore. If you are aware of work that should go into the Artstore, or working on a project, we may be able to assist you in distributing that work, locally and globally.

The Artstore is part of an Australian Film Commission initiative to develop distribution strategies for digital arts and media work. Completion December 1999. In the interim, some work is already available through the gleebooks global online bookstore [www.gleebooks.com](http://www.gleebooks.com)

Enquiries: [3V@media.com.au](mailto:3V@media.com.au) or visit [www.digitalartstore.com](http://www.digitalartstore.com)

**A U S T R A L I A C O U N C I L**

## NEW MEDIA ARTS FUND

**Closing Date: 1 Nov 1999**

### Paris Studio

The Australia Council's New Media Arts Fund is seeking applications from practising new media artists to take advantage of an exciting residency opportunity at the Australia Council's studio at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris from April to June 2000.

### Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada

Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada is an organisation dedicated to lifelong learning and professional career development in the arts, advocating interaction and stimulation for artists in a unique, multidisciplinary environment. The New Media Arts Fund, in collaboration with Banff offer new media artists the opportunity to participate in a short term residency through the Visual Arts and Media Thematic Residency Program. The residency will take place from 1 May to 2 June 2000.

### Other Programs

In addition to the residency programs, the New Media Arts Fund offer a wide range of funding opportunities for artists engaging in new media arts practice. The next closing date for applications is 1 November 1999.

To discuss selection and eligibility criteria and to receive copies of guidelines and application forms for all New Media Arts Fund programs please contact Reed Everingham, Assistant Program Officer, New Media Arts Fund, on phone (02) 9950 9116, fax (02) 9950 9111, email [r.everingham@ozco.gov.au](mailto:r.everingham@ozco.gov.au)

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## Neonverte

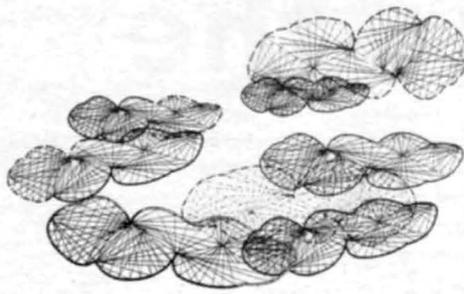
Anita Kocsis

*Neonverte* is a web based installation built as a garden—sometimes a neon evergreen, a fluorescent terrarium or a thorny 'K-Mart meets Las Vegas' undergrowth sewn with an organic structure. Stuff grows and dies, gets used and discarded. I tend to weed, restore, defrag, reload, plant and graft. *Neonverte* is perishable. A compost of interconnections has begun through working online.

*Neonverte* is built predominantly utilising Macromedia Flash 4. A combination of animations, sound, and Javascripts are used. QTVR and VRML animations initially for the site have resulted in video format utilised in installation rather than sitting in the 'plug-in' dependent corner of the web garden.

Anita Kocsis has worked in installation and painting within a digital context. She investigates "immersion environments" with emphasis on the collisions between spatial constructs in painting and virtual environments. Her own work and collaborations as a nervous\_object have furthered her interest in the prismic modality of an online practice.

*Neonverte* is part of the *Login* series of residencies at 200 Gertrude Street gallery in Melbourne. *Login* is supported by the Visual Arts/Craft Fund of the Australia Council and ANAT. It aims to assist visual artists in the development of web based projects. The *Neonverte* residency commences August. [www.anat.org.au/projects/login/anat\\_anita/neonverte](http://www.anat.org.au/projects/login/anat_anita/neonverte)



## memo

Sarah Waterson, Anna Sabiel

how can I touch you if you're not there...

*memo* is an experiment about taking a performance installation environment and its incumbent physical experiences into a virtual environment. Conceptually *memo* draws upon ideas of physical memory and image triggers that are felt or interpreted in the body.

Through a VRML scaffold structure, *memo* presents short vignettes of image-based movements triggered by the users or, more accurately, the cursor's proximity. *memo* is also an audio environment with specifically located sound. The user is immersed in a virtual 'instrument', their movement triggering a unique soundscape and mix depending on the path chosen. *memo* consists of multiple nodes branching out from the central scaffold structure. At present there is a VRML text-space with spatially presented hypertext links. Other nodes are planned to extend the present scope of the work.

Sarah Waterson is an installation/multimedia artist whose work deals with possible cyborg futures and the influence of electronic technologies on subjectivities. She is a lecturer in digital media, UWS Nepean and was a participating artist in the Brandon Project, Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA. Anna Sabiel is a Sydney-based performance/installation/sound artist. The interaction between body/movement and the production of sound has been a major concern of her work. Works include *Tensile* (originally devised for SoundCulture 1991) and *Internalised Cities* series (with Sarah Waterson and Shane Fahey). Currently Sabiel works authoring and designing educational CD-ROMs for the Board of Studies, NSW.

[www.artspace.org.au/spaceinvaders/memo](http://www.artspace.org.au/spaceinvaders/memo) Launched June 99, Artspace, *Space Invaders*. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council.

## Joovin8

Michelle Glaser, Andrew Hutchinson, Marie-Louise Xavier

The *Joovin8* CD-ROM is an interactive narrative featuring a series of hyperreal scenes which echo the intense sensory perception experienced by the dying. The thread of one life is depicted in a series of emotionally rich moments which explore the ever present duality of decay and rejuvenation. The episodic structure imitates the selective and non linear nature of memory. This gift of perception is bestowed upon the dying.



Marie-Louise Xavier

After double clicking on the icon to launch *Joovin8*, the mouse need never be clicked again. Narrative development is achieved by moving the mouse only. In *Joovin8* feedback is incremental, not boolean. This means that the closer the cursor is moved to an image's focus the higher the degree of reaction and feedback.

[www.imago.com.au/tetragenia](http://www.imago.com.au/tetragenia) Completion September 1999. ArtsWA and the Australian Film Commission.

## Archiving Imagination

Robin Petterd

*Archiving Imagination* is an online exploration of the process of collaboration between web authors Robin Petterd (media artist) and Diane Caney (writer). The project incorporates visual and verbal language, utilising and interrogating terms such as intertextuality, interdisciplinarity, net-poetry and the internet.

Documenting the process of collaboration is not a simple task. We have used sound, text and images to record meetings and versions in an attempt to show our thinking processes, but the enmeshing of ideas goes beyond these encounters.

Robin is doing her PhD at the Digital Art Research Facility at the Tasmania School of Art on a project that explores the relationships between what is organisation and dis-organisation. After completing her doctorate in 1997, Diane became intrigued by the medium of html. She began working with Robin in 1997.

[www.archiving.com.au](http://www.archiving.com.au) Completion August 1999. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council.

# The animal logic of the

Richard Smith looks at the impact on ideas and practice as feature film and animation converge

if [the cartoon film] belongs fully to the cinema, this is because the drawing no longer constitutes a pose or a completed figure, but the description of a figure which is always in the process of being formed or dissolving through the movement of lines and points taken at any-instant-whatevers of their course...it does not give us a figure described in a unique moment, but the continuity of the movement which describes the figure.

Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: the movement-image*, Minnesota UP, 1983

Animation is not the art of drawings that move but of movements that are drawn.

Norman McLaren.

Let us work with these two definitions to think about the convergence of cinema and animation that is taking place in contemporary action cinema and television, a convergence which is redefining the relations of production and post-production, and therefore the pro-filmic event itself. The first definition comes from the philosopher, film theorist, Gilles Deleuze and the second from the animator and animation theorist, Norman McLaren. Taken together the definitions indicate a point of convergence, conceptual, but nevertheless real, between cinema and animation. Gilles Deleuze's definition of the "cartoon film" is presented in the context of a definition of the specific qualities of the cinematic image. The first thing we notice is how close it is to McLaren's definition of animation—the first proposition of a theory of animation. It presents, I think, an essential inversion of the concept of animation as making animate things that are inanimate. The first thing we notice is how close it is to Deleuze's definition of the cinema.

For Deleuze, cinema is defined as an art of movement, its distinguishing feature as an art; its distinct modernity is that it introduces movement into the image, "it makes movement the immediate given of the image. This kind of movement no longer relies on a moving body or an object which realises it, nor on a spirit which reconstitutes it. It is the image which itself moves in itself." (Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: the time-image*, Minnesota UP, 1985) Deleuze's definition of the cinema is "animatic" because its material is movement and movement can only be described not represented.

For McLaren animation is also defined as an art of movement, of drawing movement. This definition is an inversion of the notion of making the inanimate animate because it refers animation to the animate. It is precisely the animate that is drawn, but not in the sense of an outline or in terms of figuration, but, to use Deleuze's term, figurally. Drawing works with movement, with transitions, with those moments when indistinction is the rule. McLaren's definition of animation is cinematic because it throws attention onto the relation between images, into the gaps in the frames—the explicit topic of his second proposition. Deleuze and McLaren's definitions of animation as cinema, and cinema as animation, converge on the concept of drawing movement.

It is in this sense that animation and cinema can be said to be forms of drawing and that drawing is a means of expressing the contours of things and not representing the state of things in fixed images that happen to move. The representation of objects is less important than unleashing the forces that constitute them, and which do not appear on their surfaces. This task of "rendering visible invisible forces", an aesthetic borrowed by Deleuze from Paul Klee, is the sense in which drawing functions in both definitions of animation. And it can provide the basis of an examination of the convergence of cinema and animation which is presently taking place with the increased utility of new media technologies. Martin Scorsese often refers to the camera as a brush and the shot as a stroke. Film theory has investigated the notion of the camera as stylus. McLaren seemed to eschew the camera by drawing directly onto the celluloid, but it seems in doing so he was not so much replacing the camera as reinventing its function as descriptor not recorder.

### From Clouzot's Picasso to The Matrix

A remarkable example of what I mean by the convergence of cinema and animation can be found in Henri-George Clouzot's film, *The Mystery of Picasso* aka *The Picasso Mystery*. This is an untimely example from film history. It was made in 1956, but it points to the convergence under discussion albeit from another direction. Clouzot sets up a unique convergence of animation and cinema by situating Picasso on the other side of a sheet of glass that is inserted between himself and the camera and which serves as a frame for the camera. Picasso then goes to work drawing in black on the surface of the glass. What is henceforth presented is not so much the process of the production of an image of a bull or whatever, but a temporal series of movements of hand and line. **And it is the movement at the heart of Picasso's drawings that emerges as the strictly artistic component of the film. Drawing is here as an art of movement. It is cinematic and animatic.**

We can in fact go a step further and argue that one of the effects of new media technology is precisely the production of this drawing-effect. Clouzot's film could be used as a model of computer animation. The upshot of this would be that the big budget action-suspense or action-adventure film (which seems to be where the more grandiose animatic effects are happening) would become more and more animated, more and more like the 'cartoon film' described by Deleuze and more and more the fulfilment of McLaren's notion of "movements that are drawn." **One only needs to watch *The Matrix* to appreciate that bodies and objects can be presented as drawn movements. I am thinking here of the cascading code but also of the Reeves character's ability to slip in-between and in and out of the motion of things, of the trajectory of objects, and to perceptually liquefy the space around him.**

## Cooking with Carmen

Tracey Benson

*Cooking with Carmen* is the latest in an ongoing project titled *Big Banana Time Inc.* which focuses on notions of identity and the role of tourism in promoting national and cultural archetypes. *Cooking with Carmen* intersects the relation of identity to self via the act of cooking, by analysing the act of consumption. This is an interactive web-based work aimed at broadening ideas around participation and collaboration by engaging responses from the audience.

There have been many challenges surrounding this project, on a conceptual and technical level. Primarily, I need to present a product which inspires participation. This is a general issue to all web developers, as is defining your audience, let alone getting them to your site.

Tracey Benson is a Brisbane based multimedia artist and curator. She has exhibited her work from the *Big Banana Time Inc.* project extensively to a national and international audience through exhibitions, performances and conference papers. Her new web-based work titled *Bananarama2000* is currently being hosted at the new Experimenta Media Arts online gallery [www.experimenta.org](http://www.experimenta.org).

Completion September.



# antz in the matrix

The expansion of post-production beyond the status of supplemental facility (if it ever was this) which has accompanied the rise of outfits such as Animal Logic attests to the possibility of a radical transformation of the 'content' of the cinematic image—a transformation which extends beyond the invention of DVD and tele-visual screens to the very definition of the image, and the pro-filmic event. This scenario would not herald the actorless cinema but rather a cinema where the actorliness of the actor is constituted at a very different level.

This is not to say that realism is dead, or even dying. Animated effects play a strong role in sustaining or deepening the sense of reality that the cinema and television are offering viewers. *Ally MacBeal* for instance, presents an order of mental-caricature through the animation of thought-clichés. *Antz* offers an infantilised notion of the colony of individuals which is Spielberg's trademark narrative of American social formation. Animation is being used to resuscitate not only the careers of screen actors by transforming them into voice-sketch combinations but also to strengthen the claim of verisimilitude in a wide array of projects.

The convergence of cinema and animation which is envisaged through the definition of drawing movement does not take place at this level but it is clear that animation is reinvigorating cinematic realism. *The Matrix* remains realist to the extent that the cascading code seeks to articulate what is assumed to be already there, the matrix and the web of plug-ins, be they objects, bodies, or the actions of bodies on objects and vice versa. If I use my credit card to buy a bottle of wine from a bottle I set in motion and interact with all manner of cascading codes, the codes of purchase, the codes of credit and debit, of stock control, the linguistic codes of the transaction between salesperson (whose name appears on the register) and purchaser (whose name appears on the bill), the codes on the label of the bottle, especially the one that reads 1.5 litre, the codes which differentiate wine from other forms of alcohol, etc. *The Matrix's* use of code seems to place such things in the image, but it does not remove the image from its realist framework.

## Surveying Australian animators: drawing with the computer

Let me shift focus and come at this question from a more practical perspective. In a recent survey of Australian animation companies that I conducted on behalf of the AFTRS (Australian Film, Television and Radio School) it became clear that producing reality-effects is bread and butter for a number of computer animation companies and animators. For instance the recent Australian mini-series *Day of the Roses* had sequences animated for visual embellishment. Sparks and flames were inserted into a crash sequence. One can surmise myriad situations where such embellishments can be used.

In the course of the study the question of drawing by computer came up again and again. Drawing with a computer is a decidedly different task from that which McLaren set himself but it is clearly an issue that confronts today's animators.

The survey was conducted on behalf of AFTRS Research and asked animators, or representatives of the animation operations of a particular company, to answer a series of questions about their operations. One set of questions pertained to the practicalities of computer animation. What skills are animators looking for in new animators? What skills are they finding hard to get? A good number of animators stipulated that young computer animators do not know 'basic animation' or 'traditional animation.' And by basic animation they mean, drawing. They referred to modelling, and to design principles, but mostly drawing. To use the words of one respondent, "we don't need operators, we need animators." It is not that young animators themselves are somehow bereft of the capacity to draw, but that the amount of preparation that is required before one can even begin to animate anything by computer is forbidding. Animation (read drawing) is now also a question of the operation of new technologies with their own cascades of codes, or to put it another way, the operations which make up the process of animation have been transformed quite dramatically from when McLaren set down his propositions. Images of McLaren at work with his magnifying glass and light table reveal a quite different apparatus from images of animation students working with mouse in hand at their Macintoshes. From a distance, the students look like office workers whereas McLaren looks like a jeweller. It seems that drawing with a computer requires a different set of optics and a different order of gesture, of habit, than drawing with scratches.

It would seem also that contrary to the rhetoric of computers being machines of great speed, objects of the future, new in the strict sense of the term, that they are slow machines, that they do not make the process of generating images any easier but aid in the combination of images. This is probably saying little more than they are the technology of slow beings. McLaren after all had to draw movements frame by frame, a very laborious and slow process, or operation, indeed.

*Richard Smith is a postgraduate in the School of Theatre, Film and Dance and is currently teaching in the School of Media and Communications, University of New South Wales. His research interest is action-suspense cinema and Gilles Deleuze's concept of cinematic time.*

## Pretty Aprons

**Alyssa Rothwell**

From the creator of the award-winning *Three Mile Creek*, *Pretty Aprons* allows you to 'sew' your way through stories and explore the lives of rural women. Narrated by a young girl, you are asked to help sew aprons as Christmas gifts for all the ladies she knows.

The emotional engagement that narrative in film can offer is something I try to include on CD-ROM. Maintaining an audience's sense of immersion in the interactive non-linear format of the stories, and using layered sound to provide a cinematic quality, are constant challenges due to the physical limitations of the medium and the computer screen.

Coming through dance and the visual arts, Alyssa graduated from the Centre for Animation and Interactive Media, RMIT in 1996. She has exhibited internationally, was a winner of an ATOM award in 1997, and represented Australia in the New Talent Pavilion at *MILIA*, Cannes in 1998. Between lecturing in multimedia at UNSW and producing her new CD-ROM, Alyssa freelances as a new media artist. [www.ozemail.com.au/~alyszar/](http://www.ozemail.com.au/~alyszar/)

Completion late 1999. Australian Film Commission.



## bodysey

**Gary Zebington**

*bodysey* is a CD-ROM (*metabody phase 2*) about corporeality's meanderings through an ecology of post-and-pophuman ideas. Body forms transmute to thoughts and utterances encountered in a space of technological and wordly wanderings.

One challenge is to coax patterns or schemes of text/body relations from the intertwinings of a number of elements—VRML, responsive text, text-to-speech, speech recognition and non-linear sound. Another is then to let the schemes wander freely.

Gary Zebington arts and programs technological semi-fictions at travelling outposts and rarely encounters steering committees. Fellow *bodysey* collaborators are Mary-Anne Breeze (mez), electrostatic artist and hypertext wordsmithess, and Andrew Garton, sound and media artist who creates net and generative works.

Completion 2000. Australian Film Commission.



## Uncle Bill

**Debra Petrovitch**

*Uncle Bill* is an interactive CD-ROM, a semi-autobiographical account of growing up in Wollongong during the 1960s, based on a performance text by Sydney sound artist Debra Petrovitch. It is predominantly a sound and visual artwork set against a harsh industrial backdrop and violent domestic situation. *Uncle Bill* is aimed to be exhibited within an installation context. A wider audience for *Uncle Bill* are domestic violence groups and support networks for survivors of child abuse.

*Uncle Bill* includes text screens, original sound pieces, video, animations and archival footage. Director, Debra Petrovitch; interactive designer, Wade Marynowsky; producer, Julianne Pierce.

Debra Petrovitch is a visual, sound and performance artist who has exhibited widely as well as producing independent soundworks and commissioned film and video soundtracks. Wade Marynowsky is a digital artist currently completing a Master of Fine Arts at College of Fine Art, Sydney. Julianne Pierce is an interactive media artist and producer and part time Project Co-ordinator at The Performance Space, Sydney.

Completion December 1999. Australian Film Commission.



## Scar tissue

**Jason Sweeney**

*Scar tissue* is a sound installation/online performance/net audio project investigating the veneer of background music, everyday noise, speech and electronic hum—one that questions systems, confronts the codes and digits, infiltrates the surface of sound construction, by breaking into the codes of the media lying at my disposal.

During a residency at Banff in Canada I will investigate, pull apart, reassemble, argue, discuss and research the nature of sound/music/noise as a tangible, changeable, permeable and highly volatile entity—taking a scalpel to technology, confronting the problems of techno-accessibility and viability of sound and performance in an online environment. The lo-fi vs hi-fi possibilities...

As an artist I work across disciplines of audio/sound art, the internet, performance and writing. My work interrogates the processes and implications of technologies of the past, present and future, technology that simultaneously throws itself in my face, without invitation, triggering me to push back and question its intrusion.

Completion mid-2000, Australia/Canada; to be developed at Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada as part of an Australia Council New Media Arts Residency.

## Carrier

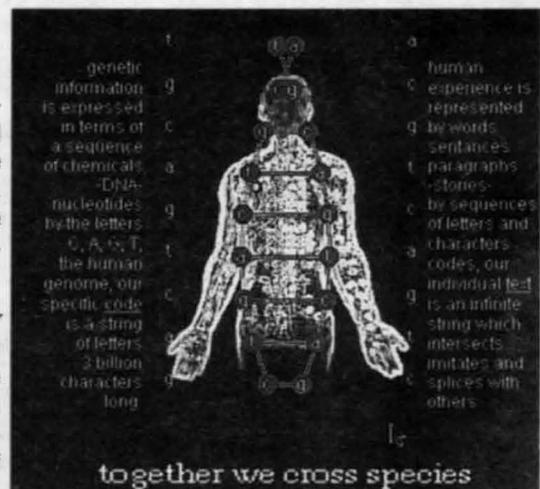
**Melinda Rackham**

*Carrier* is an experimental website investigating viral symbiosis in the virtual and biological domains, focusing on the hepatitis C (HCV) epidemic. A Java applet, named *infectious agent*, navigates the viewer along a unique site pathway, dependent upon the viewer's interactions.

The major technical challenge on *Carrier* has been for Damien Everett and John Tonkin who have worked on the stable implementation of both Java and sound on the site, which has required many alterations to the original concept because of Browser, Browser Version and Java inconsistencies between the Macintosh and PC platforms.

Melinda Rackham, an artist and writer residing on the east coast of Australia, has been working online since 1995 in her domain [www.subtle.net](http://www.subtle.net). Her earlier sites *a.land*, *line* and *tunnel* have been widely seen both in Australia and overseas. She is currently a Doctoral Candidate at COFA, UNSW.

[www.subtle.net/carrier](http://www.subtle.net/carrier) Completion 31 July. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council.



## meme\_shift#0

**Teri Hoskin**

*meme\_shift#0* is an interactive website. It's to do with an obsession with all things Japanese, as a site of the ultimate Western Other. The sources are historical, literary, philosophical, social and personal, and this environment, playing with the way we read a text, the way one can write. I'm still (always) working on and with this in the hope that a pattern will emerge. The work continues-in-process. I don't have a deadline.



The challenge is to use the technology simply and elegantly, in such a way that tests the limits of language and meaning in a digital writing space: to push what I already know. To keep files as small as possible and to utilise all the writing spaces. Next step for *meme\_shift#0* is sound, simple. I want to make an atmosphere, a cinematic engagement.

Teri Hoskin is a visual artist/writer. She works with text, paper, Adobe Illustrator and a text editor (BBEdit) in contemporary gallery spaces and online. She is Editor for the Electronic Writing Research Ensemble, Adelaide.

[http://ensemble.va.com.au/meme\\_shift](http://ensemble.va.com.au/meme_shift) An Adelaide Festival 2000 project in conjunction with ANAT, CACSA (Contemporary Arts Centre, South Australia), EWRE (Electronic Writing Ensemble).

## Mr. White's Diary

**Derek Kreckler**

"*Mr. White's Diary: an incomplete view of the end* interplays text and image in an engrossing unfolding of the last hours/words of Mr White: a bleakly entertaining suicide trip through diary, crumpled notes and screen messages that in another time, other media, might have been scored by a Peter Handke or Thomas Bernhard." (Ed.)

*Mr. White's Diary* is a work in progress in the traditional humanist sense. And...oh...yeh we are still working on it! We have to somehow get it to work on Internet Explorer I am sure the Netscape users will catch up but I.E. users will have to wait because these two browsers are now quite different. This work is impossible to view without Flash 3, QT3 and QT3VR plug-ins; the browser should only be Netscape 4.5+. The site uses mainly Flash and is indicative of where the web will go in the future. The site is experimental, of poor temperament, but delicious.

Derek Kreckler is Co-ordinator Electronic Arts and Information Technology Management; Chairman, Academy Research and Development Committee, WA Academy of Performing Arts. Edith Cowan University.

[www.working.com/spaceinvaders/white](http://www.working.com/spaceinvaders/white) Opened June 99, Artspace, *Space Invaders*. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council.

## Volcano: Shifting Ground

**Maria Miranda**

This installation will use the volcano and its shifting ground to explore cultural questions of uprootedness. It will play with notions of surface and depth. *Volcano* is also a metaphor for the way new media art shifts the ground materially and conceptually. Computers normally map geological activity and volcanism; in *Volcano* a fissure will be opened up by/in the technology.

One of the artistic challenges will be to find a form of interactivity that poetically expresses a shifting ground, its disruptions and eruptions, rather than following narrative paths. One of the main technical challenges is to explore the different grounds and/or materials of an image through scanning and downloading and to explore the interaction of images and sound.

Maria Miranda is a visual artist working in new media art. She was the visual artist on the award winning CD-ROM *Shock in the Ear*. She is currently collaborating as visual artist on the new media art installation *Dead Centre: the body with organs*, and on Dina Panozzo's performance with interactive media, *Monster Mouth*.

Completion July 2000. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council



# The big suture

*Art and technology, business and culture sewn up in Online Australia's Project 1. Keith Gallasch reports.*

We were reminded early in the day that art and technology were once one and the same in the Ancient Greek 'technē.' Project 1 was an intensive, one day Online Australia forum for cultural organisations and web-developers. As Federal Minister for the Arts Peter McGauran put it in his opening address, "Project 1 aims to encourage dialogue and interaction between the cultural and the online sectors. Ideally today's workshop will produce new partnerships, new opportunities..."

The forum was timely, lively and sometimes overwhelming as vocabularies were shared, upgraded and our mental spellchecks failed to recognise. In the morning keynote speaker Tiffany Shlain, Executive Director & Creative Producer of the Webby Awards and President of the International Academy of the Digital Arts and Sciences (US), defined online culture and panels of speakers briefly commented on their online cultural and business goals and experiences. In the afternoon, small, informal groups gathered in 45 minute *Breakout* sessions to discuss topics posted by those attending the forum. Any one of these sessions could have become the subject of at least a half day's discussion. To this extent, Project 1 provided for artists and cultural organisations starting points that warrant continued consideration and debate. Also evident was the disparity in levels of knowledge, not just between business and the arts, but within the arts where the range of experience with new technologies runs from naive to expert. At the end of the day the most frequent comment heard was, "We need more of this."

### Putting the words together

Project 1 was an intense wordfest, a word wrestle, a yoking together of terms and concepts not often used in each other's company. In the red, plush comfort of the Sydney Opera House's The Studio, words that we thought we knew lunged at us like dark strangers, others fell apart like drunks, some staggered about high on overuse (what industry other than the net describes its customers as users, someone asked) and metaphors got dangerously cocktailed. Strangest (though who should be surprised as we dizzily fight off ever recurring bouts of economic rationalism) was the way key words from the communalism of social responsibility and the kingdom of capital overlapped and intersected or crossed the line or put an uncertain foot in each camp. Words like community, trust, heritage, cultural identity and diversity served all-comers, and mixed it with brand, industry, delivery, value-adding, currency, bonuses, marketplace and consumer, though more than one speaker stumbled over 'arts industry' and 'culture' stuck in a few voice boxes.

After setting the scene—"The development of communications technology this century has done much to weave the tapestry of Australian society by combatting the tyranny of distance which we inherited so long ago and bringing Australians together in new and often unexpected ways"—Peter McGauran coolly brought home the dialectic—"...in this increasingly globalised world we must ensure that all Australians continue to participate in our diverse cultural life and heritage"—which we worried at the rest of the day along with the business/arts tussle.

### Back(s) to the future?

It was a day in which time as well as language was subject to delirium. How many times were we told that everything would be okay when we got the bandwidth we wanted, any day now, or later than we hoped, much later. Or that the arts online were three years, no five years, ten even behind business and that Australian business was five years, no seven, eight, behind America and Europe. Keynote speaker Tiffany Shlain mused that we were enjoying a New Renaissance, one analogous to the first, but with our technology at last matching our stream of consciousness. Others painted bright futures of community and access and profitability, some of it already here, some of it Australian and battling big US counterparts. One speaker gloomed that it was a future for some, but not for others as "the big five" prowled, buying up the future—small media arts companies. The same speaker, Jeffrey Cook (Director, 3V & Merlin Integrated Media), took us back to the idiosyncratic emergence of the Australian film industry (and our current international film reputation) as a model for working the net. At that moment Cook and McGauran seemed unlikely allies. Cook said, "Australian film is unique" and, by analogy with what can be achieved online, "that's all that can save us in the future." McGauran had declared, "our challenge is to ensure a distinctly Australian voice is heard amongst the hubbub of global discourse." We all looked back to look forward, we looked in to look out.

### Facts? What facts?

Statistics also eluded us with their instability and unavailability. It seems that the arts (the ABC aside) in this country have no idea at all who their audiences are. Business, however, does know its clients. But when it comes to the net, even business in Australia develops websites but will never market them. Peter McGauran said, "At present it is estimated that 70% of internet content accessed by Australians has been sourced overseas. It's clear therefore that we have to develop new ways to promote our culture to ourselves and the rest of the world." Peter Naumann (Manager Multimedia & Public Program, National Gallery of Australia) said that 50% of visitors to the National Gallery of Australia's online gallery were from the US, 70% overall from overseas. Victoria Doidge (General Manager of the impressive Chaos Music online store, our first serious taste on the day of e-commerce for artists) said they were doing impressive business nationally but also with overseas customers (how many?).

Of course, thanks to email, to its engrossing sense of intimacy and communality, we have a means of finding out like never before who's out there. And the AFL (Australian Football League) is right into it, engaging millions with pure information, including a weekly injuries list. Could theatre companies offer the same (instead of the atrociously quaint newsletters they print)—updates on hoarse voices, sore backs, critical thrashings. It seems the online means are there to find out more and more about our audiences and to project potential markets, but the work on it in

the arts has barely begun except with some film organisation and youth culture programs.

### Social good and capital success

'Intimacy' and 'community' resonated across the day with overtones of social good and capital success as we learned of the desire to belong that the net fosters through news and gossip and sensitively constructed list server levels of access ('trust' again). A new subjectivity emerged too, amplified in an advertising scenario where we no longer have to project onto archetypes. No. We are scanned into promotions as ourselves, like Martin Lindstrom's (Executive Director, Zivo) story of a NY child's face mapped onto a Barbie doll purchased through the net, and his own image (sent to him online) adorned in the latest fashions after he'd been scanned in a fashion store.

Equity and social justice occasionally surfaced from their steady subtext, humble Davids toppling corporate Goliaths in winning Shlain's Webby Awards—anyone can succeed and it doesn't have to be with every plug-in in the book. On the one hand, there was a happy free market belief in the power of individual will and creativity, on the other a serious concern to create systems responsive to those with "only a phone and a microwave" or the cheapest of computers. Email, said Tiffany Shlain and Ruby Blessing (Group Creative Director, Spike), was seriously under-utilised. Occasionally there was a myopic globalism—we're all in this together, it's universal, we're all speaking the same language (html)—oblivious to the new class lines defined by who has the technology and who doesn't, and to the millions in the world who have never seen a telephone let alone used one, and then there's UNESCO's recent report on the limited global uptake of the net. But the curious mix of laissez faire energy and the drive for social responsibility in the context of apparent technological inevitability kept issues on the boil and one's vocabulary on red alert.

### Speaking each other's language

Key words kept recurring all day—partnerships (tied to bartering), value-adding (along with bundling and bonuses), community (whether referring to a social group, a virtual one or company employees, and tied to intimacy and trust), access (how to reach as many people as possible with the simplest technological means), currency (keeping your site 'fresh', or what you can barter with—the arts are sexy, business needs you—I never quite believe this), portals (are they working, how can we make them work for us?), lists and filters (helping direct users to areas where they can then make choices) and branding (arts companies having to look beyond their logos). These fuelled much of the afternoon discussion. But there were other words used approvingly like 'chaos' and 'junk' that reminded us of a net free of 'convergence', of creative mess, and, as several speakers noted, work on the web as an ongoing experience, an evolution, something unfinished.

It was a day of anecdote, hyperbole, vision, caution and timewarps, and a wobbly lexicon—not a bad thing when you're trying to get a handle on a newish world, and not a little Shakespearean when the language is rich, silly, technical, pliant, shifting and

often barely defined. Not that I left Project 1 happily branding and value-adding: I guess I like that tension between the arts and business. If we have something to learn from each other, Project 1 was a glimpse of some intriguing possibilities needing further thought and more dialogue. True to the promise of Project 1, web developers and business managers met with artists and members of arts organisations in a dialogue worth continuing. Of course there are many artists who are web designers by the very nature of their online work and more than a few intersect the worlds of commerce and art.

### Go online for more of Project 1

For an extensive report on Project 1 visit our website ([www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/](http://www.rtimearts.com/~opencity/)). It includes a detailed account of keynote speaker Tiffany Shlain's address on online culture and how the Webby Awards work (for one thing as another kind of filter, she suggested), plus summaries of talks from Richard Fidler (panel chair, writer, performer, TV host)—"the lovely thing about the web is that it's such messy business, genuinely chaotic. Business men want to impose some elegance on it"; David Thompson (Senior Consultant, Deloitte Touche Tomatsu)—"creativity in new media hasn't yet delivered...hasn't hit on a winning formula"; Claire Byrnes (Producer, ABC Arts & Culture Online)—the need for "a content that everyone can see, therefore not reliant on plug-ins..."; Tess Dryza (Creative Director, Multimedia, Open Training & Education Network)—the task of building online communities generating trust and intimacy; Ruby Blessing (Group Creative Director, Spike)—"define different groups within your database rather than using a blanket approach"; Martin Lindstrom (Executive Director, Zivo)—"Now it's a matter of the customer becoming the star. I'm the centre"; Victoria Doidge (General Manager Chaos Music)—"we're selling Australian music to the world and it's working well for us—the top 5 on the chart are Australian independents. We create a web page for them for each of their products. They can go in and manage that page and link it to other sites and list performances"; Jeffrey Cook (Director, 3V & Merlin Integrated Media)—"For years I've been trying to get cultural organisations to work together. That's supposed to get a laugh...If we had one arts portal—not a damn government one—everyone would go to it! e-commerce you haven't seen anything yet." Peter Naumann (Manager Multimedia, Australian National Gallery)—"The gallery has 100,000 works in store rooms, has launched 5,000 on screen, and by the end of year will have 10 - 16,000 accessible."

Also in the online report from the afternoon *Breakout* sessions is a detailed account of the discussion of the future of the Australian Cultural Network which included issues of research and marketing, mega-portals, the success of the AFL site and why the Australian Cultural Network includes *Skippy* and *Neighbours* sites (thousands of hits for them). Very briefly summarised too are sessions on youth culture online, regional needs and branding, along with a few of the notable provocations including, "Only Victoria is forward-looking in new media—the rest are casualties".

*Project 1* was presented by OnLine Australia (a project of The National Office for The Information Economy) in partnership with the Australia Council, RealTime and the Department of Communications Information Technology and the Arts.

## empiricosis

### geniwate

*empiricosis* is a net-based cycle of text, image and audio which takes as its theme some of the ways in which science and art collide, and how science is visualised in popular culture.

*empiricosis* is a complex amalgam of text and other media. I am starting to create multiple outcome hyperlinked poetry mainly using Flash. I experience challenges concerning download time and streaming, especially since I am keen to incorporate audio tracks into the poetry, to be played concurrently with other media. A further challenge is presented by my extremely limited programming skills.

I started writing conventional poetry in the early 90s. This soon metamorphosed into performance poetry, and then to electronic 'poetry.' This journey has always been about amalgamating different media. Ambitions for the future include developing a concept of installation poetry. I recently won the trAce/Alt-x International Hypertext Competition for my project *rice*. [www.idaspoetics.com.au/rice](http://www.idaspoetics.com.au/rice). I work as an editor at the University of South Australia.

[www.adelaide.net.au/~slick/sitefrite/emindex.html](http://www.adelaide.net.au/~slick/sitefrite/emindex.html) Completion September 1999. Commenced during the 1999 ANAT Summer School. Further development facilitated via an online workshop: thanks Christy Sheffield Sanford and trAce (UK).

## The March of the Photobots

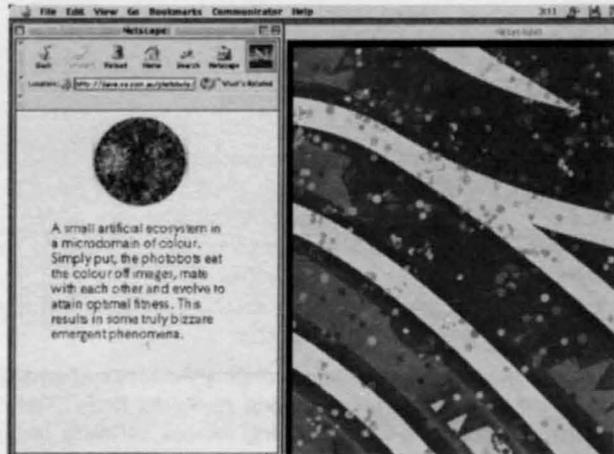
### Dave Sag, Mike Cooper

The idea: small 'artificial' creatures consisting entirely of colour are fed an image which they use as a basic foodstuff. In a matter of days they will gather in large 'caterpillar balls' which act as a whole, sucking all colour and light from the image. Dave is evolving the work into two projects, one called *V-Aura*, a wearable networked photobot environment, and one called *The yard*, which is an online persistent playground for Java based life.

Dave developed the concept and wrote the specification for the bugs' initial behaviour. The scientist, Mike Cooper, coded the photobots in Java and devised the viewer for examining the bugs in detail.

The challenges faced. Technical: the photobots can learn without having any memory, thousands of them will run within a single web page. Theoretical: conflicting theories of intelligence, machine learning and memetics. We succeeded in building creatures which can learn without having any memory of their own.

Entrant in the mcmogatk 1999 Arts on the Net exhibition, Japan. Self-funded: cheap to make, just takes ideas and a little time. *The March of the Photobots* exhibition is up in prototype stage at [art.by.arena.ne.jp/mcmogatk/1999/d\\_sag](http://art.by.arena.ne.jp/mcmogatk/1999/d_sag)



## My Room Le Grand Canal

### Philip Samartzis

*My Room Le Grand Canal* is a DVD-ROM-based project examining the specific flow, texture, space, tone and dimensional qualities unique to the city of Venice. The project will expansively draw upon these qualities in the development of a physiological, spatial and psychological portrait of a city which simultaneously acts as an anthropomorphic metaphor.

The technical aim of the project is to explore the potential of the DVD format by combining Dolby digital surround sound with full motion and full screen digital video, and digital imaging and graphics in an expansive audio visual presentation. Another aim is to combine both analogue and digital processes in the abstraction and manipulation of sound and image, so that strategies may be developed which will create a rich and unified experience of action and space.

Philip Samartzis is a Melbourne-based sound artist. He recently co-ordinated and curated the *Immersion* series of 35mm Dolby encoded surround sound performances. He also recently collaborated with Martine Corompt on *Dodg'em*, a driveable surround sound installation presented at Gallery 101, Melbourne.

Completion December 2000. Developed in co-operation with the Studio for Room Acoustics, IRCAM, France. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council.

## cipher

### Linda Carroli, Josephine Wilson

*cipher* is a work of hypertext fiction which explores the thriller genre. The enigmatic M receives a series of mysterious emails from the equally enigmatic C over a period of ten days. With each message, M is further drawn into a web of political intrigue.

Challenges of producing online work include keeping it simple and relatively easy to negotiate; maintaining a focus on written text; ensuring that you hang on to your audience, create a readerly flow by constructing pages which download in a reasonable amount of time. Technical challenges include keeping up with what's possible, trying to blend skills with creative development and decision-making.

Linda Carroli and Josephine Wilson collaborated online to produce the award-winning *\*water always writes in \*plural*. Carroli's writing background is critical and non-fiction, while Wilson writes primarily narrative fiction and performance.

Completion, September 1999. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council

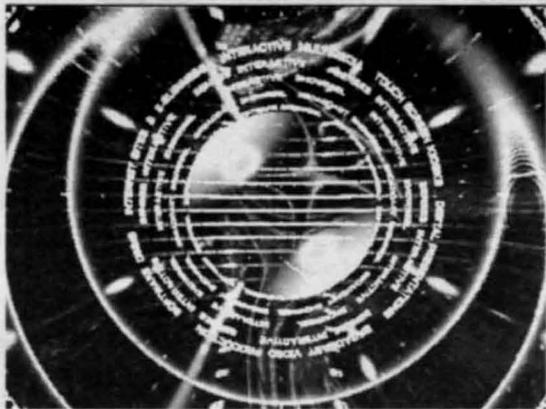
## Sensory Overload

Kevin Tham

*Sensory Overload* is an experimental, promotional, multimedia CD-ROM for Senses Interactive Pty Ltd. Filled with an array of animations, text, sound, video and special effects, it utilises the latest in digital video technology to create a fully realised Video Interactive (VI).

In attempting to create a full screen moving, Video Interactive, we have had to completely re-learn and rethink the way we usually create multimedia. We are utilising a combination of Director, Video-script and Custom code to enable full screen video interaction, working out seamless video menu loops and transitions, multi-layered video scripting, quality compression and data rates, multi-video masking and animated video rollovers.

Kevin Tham, New Media Designer/Interactivist, Bachelor of Design degree, College of Fine Arts, UNSW. Trade shows and conferences, software packages, broadcast TVCs, CD-ROM Magazines (*This! Zine* Issues 0,1), CD Case Studies, CD Tourism interactives, interactive banking, corporate and government sales presenters and demos.



## Spatial Emergence

Paul Thomas

The concept behind the project is the transphysical city, an exploration of the spatial intervals and boundaries between autonomous architectural structures. If one was to view the buildings within the city as words, then the street could be seen as a sentence. The spaces, or pauses, between the words give the sentence added meaning. Due to telecommunications, architectural infra-structures no longer need to remain in their present form. The ability to renegotiate perspectival constraints is vital research for artists at this point in time. The work is completed in its CD-ROM form but is also linked to its own developing website: [www.imago.com.au/spatial](http://www.imago.com.au/spatial)

Technology has assisted in articulating the range of emergent spaces subtly operating within every metropolis, exposing and revealing them. The challenges to visualise this were many, for instance understanding various software packages and creating video, sound, still images in an interactive format. As well there was the challenge of making the work crossplatform and having the CD-ROM link to the internet to access the website as well as download images.

My art reflects a conscious and unconscious construct of dislocation. This sense also appears in my work as social and cultural critic. Works include *Media-Space* (1981-86).

[www.imago.com.au/spatial/spatialdir/ss.dcr](http://www.imago.com.au/spatial/spatialdir/ss.dcr) CD-ROM project funding: New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council.

## Observatine

Zina Kaye

*Observatine* is a flying machine that gives a viewer the experience and control of flying, via a bird's eye view of the landscape. A pilot navigates by a projection on the floor. Since it is managed by a web-server, web-based viewers may be pilots and viewers.

This is an unmanned autonomous flying vehicle, and developing a completely untried system to manage it using the internet requires an enormous amount of team work from people with a great range of skills. Building a "roll your own" aircraft with respected members of the hobby community is humbling. One retired gentleman is the world's most accomplished forager and has turned his unit into a tool-up workshop for "greazys" and gliders. It's like stepping into Chew's cold room in *Blade Runner*.

Zina Kaye is a new media artist who uses sound composition, video and communications technologies to muse on the nature of metaphysical boundaries and the secret life of the inside. Integral to her practice is research into spatial interface and transport systems architecture. While broadcasting over terrestrial and internet radio, Kaye maintains a popular [net.sound.art](http://www.laudanum.net) website with her partner mr. snow, [http://www.laudanum.net/](http://www.laudanum.net), housing a large collection of Australian and New Zealand sound content amongst online works and theory presentations.

*observatine.net* will come online in August. Completion September 30, 1999. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council and the Commission for European Communities.



## Life After Wartime

Ross Gibson

"Some time ago, during the blustery weeks when summer gets pushed aside by winter, several people died in a harbour-side city. One or two members of the police force were convinced there was a pattern to the events..." *Life After Wartime* is a CD-ROM, a digital story-engine and musical mood-generator fashioned from an archive of police crime-scene photographs. There will be a gallery-installed version and a more private, desktop version.

Biggest challenge: generating the rhythms that are absent in most interactive multi-media.

Ross Gibson, writer/director; Kate Richards, producer; Matthew Johnston, interactivity and graphic design; Greg White, programming; Chris Abrahams, music and sound design.

Completion December 1999. Australian Film Commission.

## An other writing

Teri Hoskin looks at new writing online

*verve Fr, from L, verva, the head of a ram sculptured then something whimsical or capricious; poetical or artistic rapture or enthusiasm; great spirit; energy; rapture.*

As I read and write I am thinking about the convergence of visual, aural and verbal literacy. Gregory Ulmer's word/concept (punct) for this is 'electracy.' He writes, "electracy is to the digital as literacy is to print technologies." (Gregory L Ulmer, *Chorography* (a map) [ensemble.va.com.au/enslogic/text/ulm\\_lct.htm](http://ensemble.va.com.au/enslogic/text/ulm_lct.htm)) An electracy language would be one that works in-between oral and literate cultures. He proposes that literate thinking organised itself around shapes and forms that evolved into conceptual classification systems. Alongside literacy, electracy thinking is coming into existence via felt moods or atmospheres. Felt moods or atmospheres are the space of non-closure, generative spaces that allow a reader to write with a text, that allow an other writing.

Helene Cixous' textual practice of *écriture féminine* comes into play here too. This way of writing has no exchange or market value, it falls outside of the economy of use. It suggests a writing that comes from the relationship of the body to the social world, its practice is an undoing of the limits of logic. This is a feminine that moves around, between and amongst genders and genres.

In her generous introduction in the preview brochure for the Telstra Adelaide Festival 2000 Robyn Archer notes, "In 2000 there will also be a lot of flaming rhetoric surrounding 'new' this and 'new' that...we also need to question the new. What exactly is new? Is there any such thing as a new idea? Would we recognise it if we saw it?" This is a salient questioning that Robyn has backed up with her commitment to a consideration of writing that does not usually fall into the domain of the book. *VERVE: The Other Writing*, a celebration of online writing as part of the Adelaide Festival, will be an opportunity to consider the places where writing and the visual arts intersect. This writing finds its place in net art, CD-ROMs, video, film, comics, performance and music.

Derrida has asserted that writing comes before speech. Artists, musicians, performers, filmmakers, thinkers have known this for some time. What constitutes writing? In 1967 he wrote, "...we say 'writing' for all that gives rise to an inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice: cinematography, choreography, of course, but also pictorial, musical, sculptural 'writing' (Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 1974).

The space and place of electronic writing is highly speculative. Many things are being played out: changes to the ways we read and write—meaning how one makes thinking. The conceptual apparatus that draws discernible lines between content, meaning and style as yet lacks the light touch necessary for a critical engagement of hyperscreen works/writing. We are participants in the process of inventing a new critical faculty for reading and writing the art of new technologies. Perhaps a digital age offers possibilities for reclaiming and inventing forms of communication that have been eroded or are not possible via systems of alphabetic logic.

### A few different shapes: Electronic writing as poetics

Poetics leaves from the middle, it writes fragments and seeks to rupture the stability of syntax, sentence and narrative. Writing in this way is like constructing an object; it is like making something sing. Current marketing strategies in book publishing do not welcome shorter formats or writing perceived as 'difficult' (ie neither narrative nor poem). The web has provided an opportunity to circulate poetic practices and opened up new networks of exchange. The work may exist on a single screen, the movement and associative/poetic logic happening within the writing itself. One can leave, return, print out the work and hold it close. Linda Marie Walker is preparing a piece called *The Sadness Prayer*. She talks about "writing as composing, in the way of making a score for musical instruments or an opera. That is with many parts, threads. It is a spatial architecture, working from the 'inside' out, constructing a mobility at home, an inner home."

### Electronic poetry

Adelaide writer geniwate, co-winner of the recent trAce/alt-x hypertext competition, is currently working on *lost/found*, a series of poems that will draw on her recent travels. *Stick Figures* is a component of *lost/found* based on childhood nightmares. In a recent email geni wrote, "As an aspect of *lost/found*, this would be the panic session! It would overtly draw on some part of my experiences of Asia but I'm not clear about that yet. Obviously it's not really about Asia at all, but being a late 20th century western beast in a complex world." In an interesting twist on 'anthology', components of *lost/found* will be published simultaneously at different sites. geniwate is good at this writing. She manages to resist the overly literal visual trickery that is fairly prevalent in other e poetry (as in *jump jumps*). Economic use of Shockwave files ensures a fast download ensuring the interface works well with the intent of the poems.

### Cinematic engagement

Michael Atavar's \*\*\*\* (four stars) has written many a long horizontal scroll. In this UK site links lead away mapping a topography of the body via its movements and practices. A possible identity is created via an inventory of objects and possessions: a 'narrative' emerges from a process of repetition and list making. This narrative is not closed, it has no beginning and no end. This indirect writing has the effect of creating an incredible intimacy. The text is minimal, via gaps narrative seeds are sown. ([www.atavar.com/atavar](http://www.atavar.com/atavar))

*cipher* is a work in progress by 'collaborators' Josephine Wilson and Linda Carroli. Email conversations are the anchor for this engagement with a rhetoric that queries the value and the a/effects (now and/or eventual) of desire in the realm of electronic communication(s). There's a bit of detective work going on. Reading here is a process of constant folding, unfolding of the text. The writing manages to be both playful and deadly serious. Read the story of M ([cipher/letterM.html](http://cipher/letterM.html)) for a musing on the violent beginnings of alphabetic rule in the classroom.

Mayan hieroglyphics from a codex dated at 998AD are the source for *The Plagiarist Codex* by Miekal And. Utilising a playful logic, curious cartoon-like hieroglyphs are coupled with an English 'translation' eg "real meaning involves another's thoughts."

### The Artist as Programmer

Australian Melinda Rackham is constructing a site around a theme of some currency. *carrier* is about viral symbiosis, a play between the organic and machinic. In an email Melinda wrote, "I've tried to create an intimacy in the language with an infectious agent applet at the bottom of the screen. This is the intelligence of the site and calls its self "sHe" and addresses you by the name you choose, questioning the user almost seductively as to their preferences, which then guide them through a specific and unique site pathway, dependent upon these answers." The graphics and sound are mesmerising and I look forward to spending more time with this one on a machine faster than mine.

Linda Marie Walker, *The Sadness Prayer* and *geniwate*, stick figures, will be published at the electronic writing ensemble site early September, [ensemble.va.com.au](http://ensemble.va.com.au) where Josephine Wilson and Linda Carroli, *cipher*, can now be viewed in-process. See page 11. Miekal And, *The Plagiarist's Codex* on Gravitational Intrigue, an anthology of emergent hypermedia, CD-ROM, *The Little Magazine*, Albany, NY. [www.albany.edu/~litmag](http://www.albany.edu/~litmag). Melinda Rackham's *Carrier* is now in preview release. [www.subtle.net/carrier](http://www.subtle.net/carrier) See page 9.

Teri Hoskin is an artist and editor for the Electronic Writing Research Ensemble. She is project coordinator for *VERVE: The Other Writing*, a visual arts project for Telstra Adelaide Festival 2000. The project is a collaboration between the Festival, the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, ANAT and EWRE.

# Erasing the line between film culture and new media

Janet Merewether reports from *Impakt*, Utrecht, Netherlands and the *EMAF Festival*, Osnabrück, Germany

It seems that one of the few ways to see new international film and video work these days is to step offshore from time to time. The artificial and unnecessary separation between film culture and 'new media' culture which has occurred in Australia in recent years (due largely to funding policy) has meant that festival events are determined along media lines, which means that little experimental film has been reaching our shores for quite some time. As somebody who admits to being promiscuous (ie working across film, video and digital media) and who enjoys playing with the differences as well as the points of intersection between these media formats, I'm relieved to find some international festivals which strongly support cross-media programming styles.

A few major European festivals with film origins seem to have transcended these boundaries and are providing audiences with strong and varied film and video programming. In particular, I'm referring to *Impakt* in Utrecht, Netherlands, which also includes an impressive music component, and the European Media Arts festival in Osnabrück, Germany.

The 1999 *Impakt* featured many works which were creatively exploring the points of intersection between 'old' and 'new' media, rather than rejecting one for the other. Kodwo Eshun (who also recently spoke at the *Cinesonic* conference in Melbourne—see *RealTime* 33, October-November) referred to McLuhan's "realization that obsolete tech becomes the artform for the present." This may be true, but many artists working with digital sampling technology are retaining a strong interest in the live performance, the screening event, and the live audience.

Likewise, I doubt that the cinema as a screening site for film and video will ever really become obsolete, since humans enjoy the act of seeing and hearing and communicating in public zones. What is the place of web-based art in this equation? A recent 'opening' in Sydney of work attracted a mere handful of visitors. However, at both *EMAF* (European Media Arts Festival) and *Impakt*, installation, web-art and CD-ROM managed to happily co-exist with the screening programs, with *EMAF* also hosting a VRML art exhibition.

Some of the themes regarding technology and degradation evident in the excellent music programming at *Impakt* (see our website for Merewether's account of this. Eds) were also reflected in the films presented at both *EMAF* and *Impakt*. In Matthias Müller's *Vacancy* (Germany), a meditation on Brasilia, the "city of hope", or "ultimate utopia of the 20th century" (Eco), the filmmaker matches images from 60s feature films with identically framed shots in the present, highlighting the processes of transformation from utopia to dystopia, of the failed modernist social experiment. At *Impakt*, Gerhard Holthuis's *Hong Kong—HKG* used stunning black and white cinematography to explore the bizarre incongruities of scale and context which occur as jumbo jets land at Hong Kong's (now closed) Kai Tak airport. The planes are both overwhelming and 'as light as angels', a threatening presence as they cruise in through the rows of high rise apartment blocks.

David Gatten's *What the Water Said nos 1-3* (USA) was created by placing raw film stock into crab baskets and allowing the sea's wave action to act upon the surface of the celluloid to create both image and soundtrack. Likewise, Jürgen Reble's *Zillertal* (Germany) was created by exposing an old 16mm trailer to the weather and to chemicals, exploring the processes of disintegration and reformation of the image. Jeff Scher's *Tours* (USA) also utilised a piece of found footage, a 1950s music clip, to create a stunningly vibrant film overlaid with pop iconography, wallpaper textures and painted surfaces from the period. These are all examples of process-driven filmmaking, deeply tied to the materiality of celluloid, and so much richer than the trend towards digital scratch and dust effects 'applied' to video footage to give it the 'appearance' of film.

A work which seemed to put pressure on the medium to the point of breaking, was Sam Easterson's *A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing* (USA). Intriguing

in its presentation of a sheep's-view of life from within a flock, this work is one of many produced by his Animal Vegetable Video organisation, which aims to capture video footage taken from the perspective of every living plant and animal on earth (ambitious!). Other than the unusual point of view, the most interesting aesthetic quality of this work emerges from the fact that the video and audio apparatus cannot cope with the jerky running motion of the sheep 'host', thus when the sheep runs with the flock, violent blackouts and interruptions to the soundtrack occur. The randomness of these digital blackouts and intersected 'baa' sounds, caused by violent camera shake, led to an amusing level of absurdity.

Bob Arnold's *Morphology of Desire* (USA), also shown at *Impakt*, and winner of the Best Experimental short at the Uppsala festival in Sweden last year, combined digital and film processes in its morphed imagery derived from romance novel cover art. The complex relationship between the reader (viewer), and the poster-painted romantic heroine, is wittily explored. Arnold's use of sparse sound effects, breaking the rhythm of the pulsating heartbeat which drives the morphed transitions between images, is, as ever, curiously engaging. The finished work, with its digitally morphed transitions, was filmed as an animation, frame by frame with a Bolex camera, for the final translation back to 16mm.

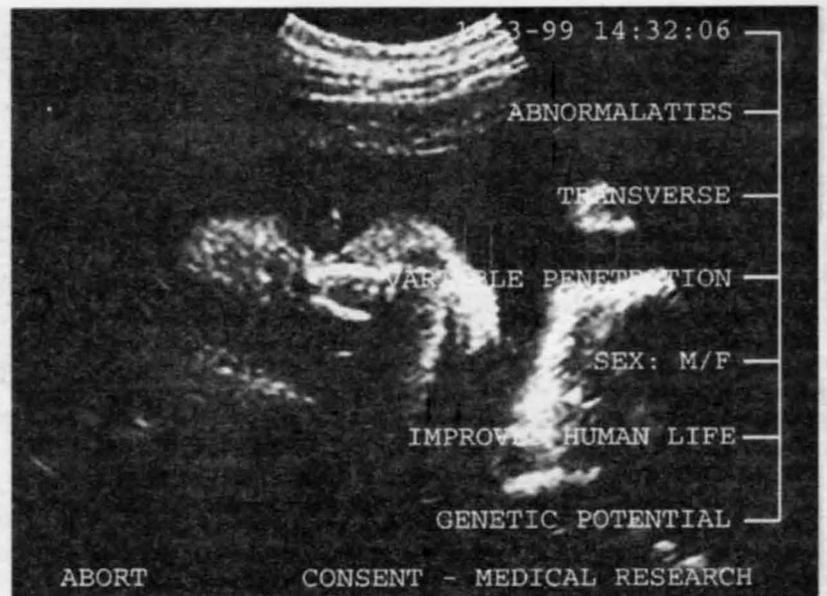
A special program in *Impakt*, *The Experience*, was dedicated specifically to stimulating the body into perceiving unusual physical experiences and mental sensations, for example in Mark Bain's *Transient Vehicle*, a shipping container fitted out with various oscillators, into which the audience was locked and vibrated. On another occasion, Klaar van der Lippe led groups of participants on a blindfolded tour through the city of Utrecht. Cyrus Frisch, a Dutch video artist whose work pushes the boundaries between himself as 'director' and his subjects, mostly disabled drug addicts, allowed himself to be hypnotised in public to exorcise some of his demons. Joe Gibbons (USA), in his 1979 8mm film *Spying*, forced the viewer to reconsider his/her collusion with the filmmaker, whilst participating with him in secretly spying on ordinary people in the act of, amongst other things, lovemaking or sunbathing. These varied events successfully extended the range of activities a contemporary festival can offer audiences.

Oddly enough, the most common enquiry I had from curators from the USA and Europe was "Where have all the Australian film and video artists gone?" Obviously, our funding climate, which heavily favours interactive formats, is adversely affecting the balance of local production, and has meant that filmmakers such as Paul Winkler are almost the sole representatives from Australia in these festivals. At the Ann Arbor Experimental Festival in the USA recently, Sydney films took out three of the awards, and all were self-funded by the filmmakers (Winkler's *Rotation*, Greg Godhard's *Mind's Eye* and my own *Cheap Blonde*).

At events such as *Impakt*, it seems that the integration of film, video, digital media and sound/music events in the one festival encourages debate, and acknowledges the processes of cross fertilisation between formats, a dialogue, which, in Australia, does not seem to be occurring very frequently. The separation of 'film festivals' from 'new media' events is unfortunate, as digital art screenings are looking more like showcases of visual effects rather than explorations of ideas, and local filmmaking suffers from a paucity of visual ideas. In the meantime, I'll happily continue to be suspended in the crossover zone, enjoying the best of both worlds.

*Impakt*, Utrecht, Netherlands, 11 - 16 May; *EMAF Festival*, Osnabrück, Germany, 5 - 9, May.

Janet Merewether attended these festivals with her short film *Cheap Blonde*



## Præternatural

Michele Barker

*Præternatural* aims to present a genealogical exploration of the cultural, medical, and scientific role of the monster in Western culture from the 17th century to the 20th century. Further, it questions contemporary contextualisations of the monstrous due to developments in the area of biomedical and genetic research.

Originally, *Præternatural* was designed to be a DVD-ROM work, a platform that would have allowed me to produce the piece without compromising on video and audio quality. Unfortunately, DVD-ROM is not so widely developed for the Mac platform, forcing me back to CD-ROM and all of its constraints.

Michele Barker works as an artist within the area of new media and her recent work on the monstrous will form part of a PhD. Exhibitions include *Specimens* at Artspace and *State of the Heart* at The Australian Centre for Photography. A former Digital Media Coordinator for the Museum of Sydney, she currently lectures in Photomedia at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW.

Completion October 1999. Australian Film Commission.

## Wunderkammer

Anna Munster

*Wunderkammer* is an experimental interactive for CD-ROM. Using the visual metaphor of a baroque Cabinet of Wonders, it encourages the user to explore labyrinthine digital spaces and to collect bizarre specimens. These can be used to furnish the user's own virtual cabinet. While the user wanders and constructs, the specimens take on a life of their own displaying surprising and destabilising behaviours.

*Wunderkammer* uses both game and behavioural elements programmed in Director and using Quicktime VR interfaces supported by relational databases to inquire into curiosity and wonder. Technical challenges involve the smooth integration of graphics, sound and movie databases into CD-ROM format.

Anna Munster is a digital artist and writer living in Sydney. She has exhibited at Artspace, Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney, Kawasaki City Museum in Tokyo, and most recently at the 1998 Melbourne Festival.

Completion April 2000. Australian Film Commission.



## Untitled

Matthew Johnston

The two CD-ROM projects are an interactive narrative and an interactive that depends on sound frequency and modulation. The first is a series of short scenes composed in a similar manner to a 3D crossword puzzle that allows the user to jump in-between tracks of video. The second uses frequency modulation to effect a 3D object in its environment.

The development of hierarchical structure needs to be a strong point of these projects to overcome a myopic time-line, but the most challenging aspect of both is the design of a 3D engine for the narrative's platform and 3D modelling for the other. The programming is the most exciting aspect because of the foreign nature of V-B scripting.

Matthew Johnston originally trained in painting/drawing and sculpture at Newcastle Art School between 1994-5; over these two years he showed in a number of small collective exhibitions. He enrolled at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW, completing a BFA majoring in time-based art (film and multimedia), and was part of the AFC/ABC *Stuff-art* initiative for 1999.

Completion November 1999.

## The Glass Bell

**Sophea Lerner**

*The Glass Bell* is a gesture-driven, audiographic installation. It comes out of stories which resonate through the lives of three generations of women in the artist's family. It is a fictional poetic construct, an underwater archaeology which explores the role of stories as placeholders for the unutterable, for what falls between languages and places when we leave. It will comprise a large 'touchscreen' (about 1m x 1.5m) with water running across it. Diverse gestures on this surface will effect various changes in the audio, narrative and visual elements. The audio was developed first during a residency with *The Listening Room* in 1998.



There is no such thing as a touch screen that big so we have to start from scratch designing and building the hardware and the interfaces. Another challenge has been designing the software component to be flexible and modular enough to use as a compositional tool for flexible duration work, not just to stick everything together after decisions have been finalised. To be operated from a Powermac 7300 with a PC running part of the interface to the screen hardware and a K2000 carrying a fair chunk of the audio processing.

Sophea Lerner, an artist and broadcaster with a special interest in flexible duration audio works, has spoken internationally on sound design for new media and was last year's Australia Council New Media Arts Fund artist in residence with *The Listening Room*. Collaborators for *The Glass Bell* include artist/engineer David Bartolo and programmer Ryan Sabir.

Completion early 2000. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council

## Escape from Station E

**Irene Proebsting**

An interactive CD-ROM based around the themes of industrial decay, work practices and gender issues, coupled with biological and technological experimentation. I have drawn on various ideas from textbooks, news items, cinema and historical documentation and presented them as an abstract series of events using a variety of stylistic elements from collage to sci-fi movies.

Using Macromedia Director as the main assembly program and incorporating scanned images, collage and 3D, I have created an environment which will enable the user to explore various spaces and activate animations linking different images and themes.

Lingo scripting, image manipulation, 3D modelling, sound & video capture, editing & animation have been the challenges of this project.

Recent exhibitions: S8 film screenings: 1999, *Ultraprojections 2*, Melbourne; 1998, XLR8 Summer Salon, CCP, Melbourne, *Traceable Emissions*, Queen Vic Women's Centre, Melbourne; 1997, SURPRISE International Short Film Festival, Taiwan; 1996, *Dispersions*, Erwin Rado Theatre, Fitzroy; *Viva 8*, London Filmmakers Co-op, Toynbee Hall, London.

Completion late 1999.



## Sontel

**Mike Leggett**

*Sontel* (working title) is an interactive multimedia work, a prototype CD-ROM. Landscape is the mediated image, a representation central to beliefs and identity within Australian culture both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Through a dynamic and interactive process of presentation, intersections are made with interpretations and mediations about The Land. In collaboration with Brad Miller, Adam Hinshaw, Alex Davies, Bruno Koenig and Kathryn Wells.



The navigational precept involves the technically complex intersection of four Quicktime movies at any one time—sequenced images which take the user forward through the landscape, or back through the route just travelled. Or a 360 degree view visible from various key zones, panning either to left or right. This continuous pan is a morphed image of landscape which enables, as an option, access to various series of short narratives (topographies of knowledge), associated with the land, its many appearances, its many histories.

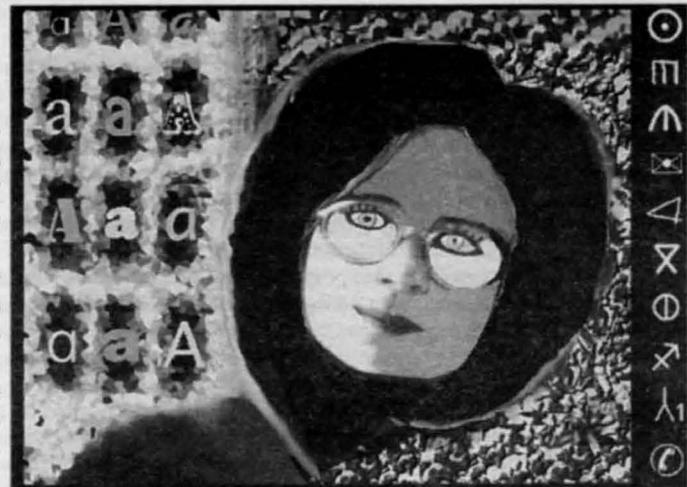
Mike Leggett has been working across the institutions of art, education, cinema and television with media since the early 70s. He has film and video work in archives and collections in Europe, Australia, North and South America and practises professionally as an artist, curator, writer, director, producer, editor, photographer, teacher, manager, administrator and computer consultant.

Prototype completed with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission in June 1999, project completion 2000.

## As I May Write

**Sally Pryor**

*As I May Write* is an experimental and interactive artwork about writing systems and the human-computer interface. Explores histories (earliest graphemes, "Picture Writing"), contemporary visual languages (Blissymbolics, logos), relevant theories (hypertext, semiotics), and possible applications of "intelligent" icons in an interactive media space.



My biggest challenge is that I make art in order to find out what I think/feel about something. So I can't do detailed technical and artistic planning before starting. I have to program it, "look" at it, re-program it etc in a spiral process that works for me but makes team work difficult. The medium will probably be a combination of CD-ROM (for the bandwidth) and interactive online (for the connectivity and fluidity).

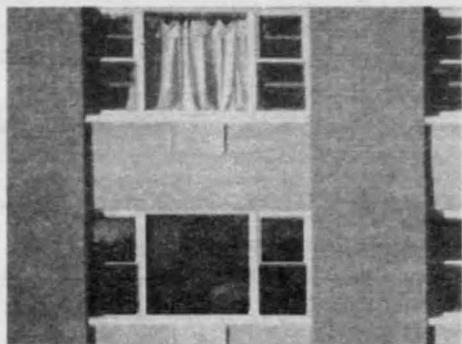
Sally Pryor is an artist/programmer and independent multimedia developer with an eclectic background including biochemistry and 3D computer animation. Her most recent work was the internationally award-winning CD-ROM *Postcard From Tunis*.

[www.ozemail.com.au/~spryor/write.html](http://www.ozemail.com.au/~spryor/write.html) Completion December 2000. New Media Arts Fund Fellowship, Australia Council

## Fan Girl

**Dooley Le Cappellaine**

*Fan Girl* is a CD-ROM work. In January 1995 I began to take a photograph each day at a different time of the progress of a building going up across the street. I was waiting for something to happen. Finally it did. The building was complete, destroying half my view of the New York skyline and I began to consider moving. I noticed that due to the remarkably shallow architectural plan of the apartments across the street, the occupants were almost on permanent public display. The building took on the fascinating aspect of an antfarm and I soon had names for my favourite characters. (I don't watch TV.) My favourite was the "fan girl." I first noticed her on a bright early afternoon performing spectacular sex almost on the window ledge. This went on with amazing regularity always with a new partner. Eventually she found a boyfriend and gradually the performances tapered off; it must have just been a phase in her life; things change.



One of the things I had been thinking of while working on some interactive projects was how passive and ingratiating most art for walls is and also how "interactivity" is generally just click/reward/click/reward. I began to study programming in Director earnestly for a way to make the "fan girl" an artwork which would operate according to its subject matter, voyeurism. After about a year I was able to write the program: at specific times (day/month) uncontrollable by the viewer the work will change to show a different episode in the life I observed for a time.

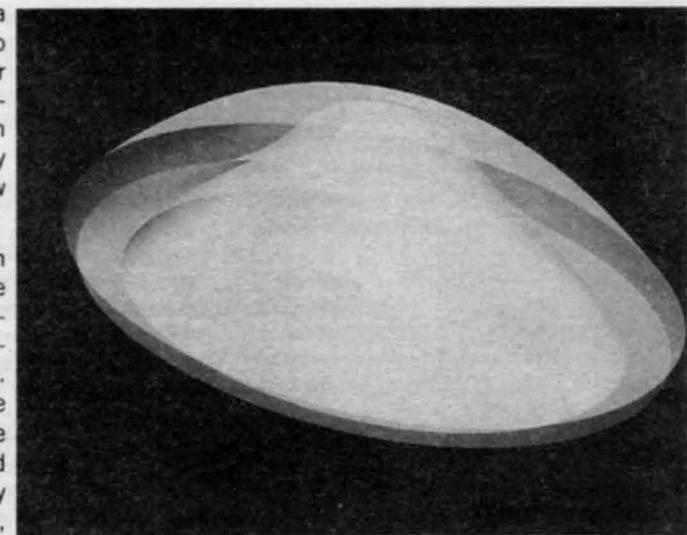
Dooley Le Cappellaine is an artist who has exhibited internationally and curated *Technophobia*, the first independently produced interactive exhibition of original multimedia works on CD-ROM. She is currently curating a program of web art works at <http://www.thing.net/dooley>

## blue in the bluebird

**Jennifer Seevinck**

*blue in the bluebird* is a computer animation loop of 6 minutes, intended for gallery installation. Concept and animation by Jen Seevinck and sound by Tim Kreger (see interview in *RealTime* #32).

After modelling birds in 3D computer space these were animated in specialised animation software, *Houdini*, as flocks. 'Forces' in cyberspace were modelled to animate both individual birds and the flock. Successfully integrating these layered, fluid movements inherent



to the conceptual structure within the limitations of computing and rendering large data streams was a challenge.

Originally trained in architecture, Jen Seevinck has worked in theatre design, independent filmmaking, dance and digital media. Her research interest in 'cyberplace' complements her computer animation work and collaborations. After teaching and submitting her Masters in Electronic Arts at the Australian Centre for the Arts and Technology, ANU, she has moved to Deakin University to continue lecturing in animation and multimedia.

Completed June, 1999. Will be installed as part of the contemporary media exhibition *Probe* in Beijing, October 1999.

# Digital media across the arts

Traditional art forms have embraced new media in varying degrees, at different speeds. In most, progress has been stop-start, cautious, moreso than with artists who work direct to screen without the variables of, say, performance to take into account. New ways of working (programming, scoring), of presenting work (positioning screens in a performance space, in an installation, in a gallery, in relation to the bodies of performers and audiences), of researching, have had to be learnt from scratch by many artists wanting to explore the multimedia effect of other forms on their vision.

The term 'multimedia' has been challenged, at least in principle if not in usage by 'intermedia' (Darren Tofts, "Cutting the new media umbilicus", *RealTime/OnScreen* #27 page 22), suggesting the importance of interplay (rather than the mere multiplicity) of forms and new technology, of the material and the virtual, and the importance of open-ended collaboration.

Under these circumstances, traditional forms blur, intermedia experiments generate hybrids and new works become difficult to categorise. For example, works by Norie Neumark, Philip Samartzis (see page 11), Nerve Shell, Rodolphe Blois and Randall Wood promise striking visual and environmental experiences but have sound well and truly at their centre, framing and driving their works. It's not surprising that the word installation has risen to such prominence (and been treated with such critical wariness). The installations listed on these pages are variously sound or video responsive but require participant movement, hopscotch or breath (quite different from the interactivity via mouse and click listed elsewhere in *Working the Screen*).

## Performance

### Eat Your Young

#### Arena Theatre Company

A lush, futuristic action adventure set in a privatised fully automated institution for minors in state care. Three children struggle to stay together in a climate of rapid change, a culture of fear where the young have come to represent the perpetrator, the icon of a society out of control.



Nadja Kostich, Panacea, 1998

Ioannis Ioannou

The screen is often used as a backdrop in performance, but a performance that truly engages notions of screen culture in its evolution is much more challenging. *Eat Your Young* plays with the notion of real time by creating inherent formal questions in the viewing of the work. These questions are asked via a seamless vision mixing between the projected pre-recorded and live image (shot on robotically controlled tracking to allow precision repetition of X and Y axis pathways through space and time), design integration, live and pre-recorded vocal dub, computerised show control and continued use of mixed high tech and low tech aesthetic allowing effect and machination to be read simultaneously. Main challenges—our appetite exceeds our purse, clarity of dialogues across collaborators.

Arena Theatre Company aims to create multidisciplinary performances that reflect the complex multiple nature of human experience. Arena's manifesto cites young audiences at the fore of new cultural expression, fluid in their skills of deconstruction and symbolic comprehension. Recent work includes the *anthroPOP* trilogy *AUTOPSY*, *MASS* and *PANACEA*. Winners of the 1999 ASSITEJ International Honorary Presidents Award.

Completion March 2000. Arena is funded triennially by the Australia Council Theatre Fund and annually Arts Victoria.

### Triple Alice

#### Tess de Quincey

A gathering in hard space and virtual space, *Triple Alice* engages with Australia's Central Desert as a burning point in its mapping of the future of artistic, cultural and media practice. Held over three years 1999 - 2001, *Triple Alice* convenes a forum and three live, site and temporally-specific laboratories staged over three weeks each year.

We are finding that remote broadcast and networking demands a cultural delicacy but also a technical capacity which as yet is under-resourced in its ability to meet the vision of this event. The KOZ online Community Publishing System will be fundamental to the project. Linked to the main site, KOZ creates an online congregation minus html phobia, and gives each visitor or, rather, 'online resident' their own web page and email address.

*Triple Alice* is initiated by Tess de Quincey, current recipient of the Australia Council Choreographic Fellowship. She has worked extensively in Japan, Europe, India and Australia as solo performer, teacher and director. *Triple Alice* is a partnership between BodyWeather, Desert, Centre for Performance Studies (University of Sydney) and The Performance Space.

[www.triplealice.net](http://www.triplealice.net) September 20 - October 10. Workshop component Australia Council funded.



Lake Mungo 1991

Heidrun Löhr

In dance and performance, the number of intermedia ventures is steadily multiplying, with notable contributions from Arena Theatre Company, skadada, The Party Line, Company in Space, Brink Visual Theatre, Salamanca Theatre Company, Doppio-Parallelo and others. Dance company Chunky Move have just released a CD-ROM, and choreographers Garry Stewart and Chrissie Parrott are engaged in new media investigations. Visual artists have not been slow to turn to the screen: galleries and contemporary art spaces have become first homes for a large number of new media works, either with on-off exhibitions like Mike Leggett's *Burning the Interface* for the MCA, or Artspace and PICA's continuing hosting and curating of new media shows, or the Bendigo Art Gallery's current exhibition, *byte me*, with conference (speakers: Troy Innocent, Jon McCormack, Kevin Murray, Patricia Piccinini, Darren Tofts, James Verdon, Peter Hennessey). There's *Globe* the online journal/gallery. Michael Keighery explores 'digital ceramics' at the University of Western Sydney. And recently there's been an impressive surge in innovative writing 'in' the web (tracked in *RealTime's* regular hyperfictions and websites pages) with some significant Australian contributions, prize-winners, and an Adelaide Festival presence in 2000. Public art too has taken to the digital with Patricia Piccinini's *Protein Lattice—Subset Red, 1997*, a huge digiprint on a Melbourne building; Robyn Backen's work-in-progress, *the building that speaks*, detailed on these pages; Melbourne's Federation Square outdoor screens; and David Chesworth's sound installation for the Olympic site (see Keith Gallasch, "Game to play" *RealTime* #29 page 42). The promise of new media across the arts is steadily being realised—we offer only a few of the many works to be seen shortly.

### Humanoids in progress

#### Arthur Wicks

This is the early stage of a mixed media work where a group of "humanoids" are mobilised by remote control. The next stage of the project is to implant sensors which respond to a variety of inputs. The humanoids will then be able to interact relatively independently with an audience. Control of the physical servo mechanisms will be through a series of micro processors programmed to relate sensor input to specific physical responses. This phase of the project requires collaboration with an electronic engineer and the testing of stronger and more intricate physical servo mechanisms (such as those used in aerodynamics). This will enable the humanoid to perform more intricate physical responses over a longer period. Project time frame approximately 1999 - 2002.



Humanoids at the Brisbane Festival Arthur Wicks

Arthur Wicks has been involved with performance since the early 1970s. More recent works have involved the construction of machines which are "barely engineered, nearly built, narrowly operative. They teeter on the edge of collapse." (David Hansen on Wicks' *Last Work, The Daily Advertiser, 1992*)

### Tower of Light

#### Melbourne Workers Theatre,

#### The Institute of Complex Entertainment

*Tower of Light* explores gaming culture and corporate responsibility in a world where winning is everything and losing is invisible. It incorporates live performance and music, community groups, large scale puppetry and soundscape with projected digital video, slide and other electronic media. Director Susie Dee, visual media designer Chris Harris and lighting designer Nathan Thompson explore the role of immersive media spectacle in creating the illusory promise of gaming culture. They have been working in close collaboration with the writer, musical director and set designer to create an environment of images designed not only to seduce and dislocate, but also provide another effective layer of truthful communication within the performance itself.

The challenge for the creative team has been to use technology to build an environment of light and projection which successfully interacts with all the other elements and maintains the performance's integrity.

Chris Harris studied sculpture at the SA School of Art and was a core creative member of desoxy Theatre for four years. He now works in Melbourne as theatrical stage and projection designer and a production manager. Nathan Thompson runs The Flaming Beacon, a small lighting design office in Melbourne. He has created lighting designs for performance, architecture and new media in projects on 5 continents. His recent piece with Christian Möeller, *Audio Grove*, installed at the Spiral Gallery Tokyo won a prize at last year's Prix Ars Electronica and was re-mounted for Cyber 98 in Lisbon.

October 17 - 30, Melbourne Festival, Royal Melbourne Showgrounds. New media component funded by New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council

### White Collar Project

#### Nerve Shell

A sound/performance installation to take place on a rooftop site in Sydney's CBD. A hybrid of telecommunication devices, dance, spoken word, film and soundtrack. The audience, issued with personalised aural receivers, will experience a relayed series of live mixed and ever changing events emanating from remote performance sites. Primarily driven by the sound, the performance will implicate the invisible traces of the digitalised human and the gridded exchanges of the millennial city.

Among the challenges for *White Collar Project* are ways to immerse the spectator in a constructed world using real architecture, sights and sounds in a responsive way so that the prefabricated elements spark 'incidents.' Some of the challenges will be purely practical: negotiating fierce environments for access to city space during 2000; sourcing the most flexible technology; and interlacing, through live mixing, all the strands of this experience.

Nerve Shell is Caitlin Newton-Broad and Gail Priest. Together they created *Dead Girls' Party* (The Performance Space Gallery 1997), a sound performance installation exploring the lost lives of famous artists' wives. Caitlin is a writer/director. Gail is a sound designer/performance artist. Other artists contributing to this event include Samuel James, Shane Wynter, Regina Heilmann, Joel Markham and Ben Rogan.

April 2000. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council

## To Eat Flowers and Walk on Glass

**Salamanca Theatre Company & syt (salamanca youth theatre)**

A performance and installation with video, *To Eat Flowers and Walk on Glass* resulted from an 8 week creative development process involving STC artistic director Deborah Pollard, guest installation artist from Indonesia Hedi Hariyanto, Sean Bacon, Sally Rees, Poonkhin Khut and other emerging Hobart artists. The title is inspired by the Javanese trance dance called *Jatilan* in which the male dancer falls into trance and become possessed by horse spirits. The horse spirits are fed flower petals. The project will examine the many subcultures that exist within contemporary youth culture and compare them to some traditional counterparts.

The work will stylistically explore the interface of live action (tattooing and piercing) in relation to pre-recorded and live video. The ability of the video eye to digitally bring the action to a scale that is larger than life will be pitted against the effect of real action in real time. The installation will take place over 4 hours. Just as a tattoo slowly transfigures the body, video installations will create an atmosphere of constant transition as they imperceptibly change over the course of the work. A constant beat drawn from myriad trance cultures will continuously build and subside. The sound installation comprises live mixing and percussion.

CAST Gallery, Friday 27 August. Hedi Hariyanto courtesy of an artist-in-residence program, University of Tasmania. Australia Council, Arts Tasmania; with support from CAST (Contemporary Art Services Tasmania).

## States of Kinship

**Doppio-Parallelo**

**Sustenance Productions**

*States of Kinship* was created as an adjunct to Doppio-Parallelo's live theatre performance of the same name, written by Melina Marchetta. Based on a journey of cultural/personal discovery, the website relates to the rites of passage of the main character, Francesca. Enhanced by animated images and sound, the user explores her inner world. The script is set someplace between sleep and waking, between the physical dimension of live performance and the virtual space accessed via technology.



*States of Kinship*

Lynne Sanderson

Beyond the technical difficulties of multiple platforms and browser differences was the challenge of condensing and distilling the essence of the script into a website to complement the live performance. We wanted to look at new approaches to performance writing and ways of engaging our communities in both urban and rural centres. In 1998 we brought a national group of cultural workers to our *On Contested Ground* public seminar at Ngapartji Multimedia Centre to discuss the notions of kinship, memory and racism—themes that are influencing our work over the next few years. Discussions were held with both real and online communities about what these issues mean to them today in Australia.

With the support of the Australian Film Commission, Ngapartji, Media Resource Centre and Australian Network for Art & Technology, a research group called Rosebud was established to undertake study regarding narrative and interactivity for performance. This group would later inform the practice for the *States of Kinship* project.

As Sustenance Productions, Lynne Sanderson (Digital Artist) and Peter Sansom (Sound Designer/Composer), have collaborated on computer animations *Need* and *Primal Debug* which have been exhibited extensively including MTV Australia and the touring exhibition *An Eccentric Orbit* which opened at MoMA, NYC and is currently touring nationally. Other works include the multi-screen installation *...mutant!...* exhibited at the EAF and the website *Somnolent Fantasies* ([www.unisa.edu.au/sleep/art/title.html](http://www.unisa.edu.au/sleep/art/title.html)) created during a residency at the Centre for Sleep Research, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Adelaide. <http://sustenance.va.com.au/Sustenance Productions>

[www.doppio-parallelo.on.net](http://www.doppio-parallelo.on.net) *States of Kinship*, the performance, July 26 - August 7 1999, EDS Centre, North Terrace, Adelaide. Australia Council and ArtsSA.

## Monster Mouth

**Dina Panozzo**

A live performance with CD-ROM. In a state of psychic torment, a woman searches the internet for spiritual guidance. Along the way she encounters a female Jesus, a ghost turned body snatcher and finally her own personal apocalypse.

For the writer the challenges have included negotiating the different languages of computer graphics and text for a live performance. A sketch for a scene involving the snatching of my body almost wrote itself when I saw Maria Miranda's images. For Maria, creating a trashy net-like world as well as a set of surreal images for large scale projection meant stretching the capacity of her low-end equipment to the limit: "For this scale of projection it's all silicon graphics these days, but I enjoyed pushing Photoshop to do something wilder than normal. And the fact that the work is not timed for an interactive user but for an audience watching a live performance has sometimes meant more precision in the design." Yet to be encountered is the challenge of Greg White's programming and his sound design as they relate to the rhythms of spoken language and Elena Katz-Chernin's music, followed by the interactions of live performer, a very large screen and an audience.

Dina Panozzo is a performer and writer living in Sydney. Her performance work with live video camera, *Varda Che Bruta...Poretta* (Look how ugly she is, poor thing) was produced with Open City in 1995, premiered in Sydney and toured to Adelaide and Melbourne.

Creative development of the CD-ROM component funded by the New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council. Dramaturgy and administration, Open City. Additional support from Playworks.



Dina Panozzo, *Monster Mouth*

image: Maria Miranda

# Dance

## Architecture of Biography

**Hellen Sky, Company in Space**

*Architecture of Biography* (working title) is a multiform interactive performance work and installation constructing metaphorical relationships to architectural space and universal biographies.

Collaborating artists: Hellen Sky, concept and direction; John McCormick, computer systems, design; Margie Medlin, image & light; spatial design, Simon Barley; dramaturgy/text, Margaret Cameron; sound design, David Chesworth; performers, Ros Warby, Louise Taube, Alan Widdowson, Margaret Cameron.



*Architecture of Biography*, performer: Louise Taube, image/light: Margie Medlin, photo: Hellen Sky

The challenge is in collapsing traditional relationships between movement, text, image, space, score, and in defining appropriate digital interactive systems, audio and image, and their methods of delivery through traditional and responsive digital means.

Hellen Sky, Co artistic director Company in Space, is a choreographer, performer, image maker creating performance and installation work using dance and new media. These works have been extended as telematic performances, bringing new relationships between performer, audience and site, most recently in *Escape Velocity* at IDAT '99 (International Dance and Technology), Arizona/Melbourne. Hellen is also Co-artistic Director of Dancehouse.

Completion 2000. Collaborative development funded by New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council.

## Landscape Fate

**Cazerine Barry**

Tools: 1 dancer, 1 computer, 1 camera, 1 video projector. Psychological evocations of the historically infantile. Technically speaking, this is a solo performance; the use of projected multiple performers, however, leaves the audience with the impression of a much larger ensemble. Ethereal and layered images are projected into the performance, literally and conceptually. Sequential video images are used to create a spatial context for the movement while simultaneously exploring temporal and spatial distortion.



Challenges. 1. To perform by myself and sustain interest. 2. To create an image-story in seamless and illusory partnership with the performance. 3. To employ a process which alternates between digital and performance creation, allowing each to inform the other. 4. To be realistic about the time it takes to adjust moving image compositions that could have taken days to make. 5. To defer the yearning for more time, money and hard-drive space.

Cazerine Barry is a choreographer, performer and video artist. Awards have included a Scholarship to the American Dance Festival, Australian Cinematography Award for *FEAR* co-produced with Adrian Hauser; an Asialink Fellowship and a residency with the Australian Indonesian Institute co-directed with Kate Mackie. New Media Fellowship, Choreographic Centre 1998.

Work in progress performance, KYKLOS cultural event, September 3 -4, North Melbourne Arts House. Complete performance for Tokyo International Festival of the Arts, October 1999; Taipei and Hong Kong for Little Asia Tour produced by Hirano Pty Ltd and Melbourne City Council.

## At Home Not Alone

**John McCormick**

An interactive online environment (developed out of company in space's *The Pool is Damned*) allowing a global audience to construct the realities of four characters and the effects of power on their lives. Realities are constructed in real-time by choreographing gestures and rhetorical audio soundtrack.

Challenges: to maximise global audience interaction through web TV delivery systems; to ensure sound and video environment are malleable over the modem; to create a multi-user environment allowing more than one person to communicate through the site simultaneously.

John McCormick Co-director company in space and currently a visiting artist at RMIT Interactive Information Institute. John has been designing interactive dance works and computer systems allowing performer and audience to influence outcomes in the work. He is currently researching networking systems, ISDN and WEB Broadcasting for current and future projects.

Completion September 99. Arts Victoria and AFC New Media.



*Home Not Alone* (working title)

video: Oliver Qui Wang performer: John McCormick

# Sound & Screen

## Marine

**Rodolphe Blois, Randall Wood**

*Marine* is about our ambivalent relationship with water, the emotions it inspires of attraction and fear. A collaboration between soundscape composer Rodolphe Blois and filmmaker Randall Wood, *Marine* is in the early stages of creative development. It combines electro-acoustic music, cinematic and theatrical elements—a 50 minute "cinema for ears" work. Projected onto 3 screens almost enclosing the audience, the images are being constructed in response to electro-acoustic compositions from abstracted or anecdotal views of water showing natural or techno-based fluid qualities and the movements, reflections and distortions of forms and sources. *Marine* questions conventional relations between sound and screen and the omnipresence of visual images in cinema, proposing an alternative by giving the sonic dimensions a richer and more prominent role.

Randall Wood is a documentary filmmaker and a visual theatre projection artist. He produces documentary films with a social and humanitarian focus for education and television. His most recent film production is *Selo! Selo!* for SBS TV (see OnScreen in *RealTime* #32). His visual theatre work integrates large multi-image projection with dance, puppetry and drama. He is a key collaborator with Brisbane based visual theatre company Brink Performance (*Under the Big Sky* 1997).

Completion 2000.

## Dead Centre: the body with organs

**Norie Neumark and collaborators**

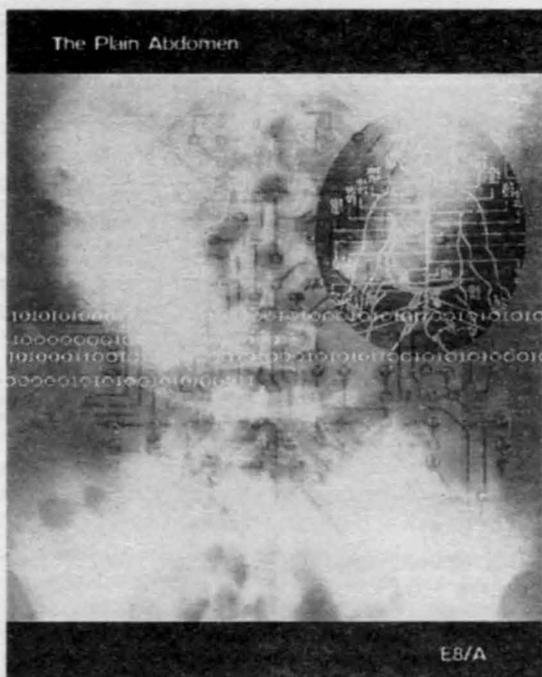
This sound/performance installation explores and plays with bodily organs as they are being reconfigured in computer culture. It explores computers as one particular incarnation of organs. The work also plays with the way art, not just science, can create metaphors through which we understand and interact with the biological and technological world.

Collaborators: Norie Neumark, sound, direction; Amanda Stewart, text, vocals; Maria Miranda, images; Greg White, sound design, programming.

A conceptual and technical challenge was to have complex, integrated but dynamic sound including composed, performative, and interactive sounds. Another was to create an affective interactivity that is a tendency rather than a trigger. It was also a challenge to have non-representational visuals that respond both to the sound and ideas.

Norie Neumark is a sound and new media artist. Her CD-ROM, *Shock in the Ear*, won major awards in Australia and internationally. Amanda Stewart is an experimental poet and sound artist. Maria Miranda is a visual artist. Greg White is a composer and programmer. (Maria and Greg also collaborated on *Shock in the Ear*.)

Completed July 1999, exhibited at The Performance Space, Sydney. New Media Arts Fund, Australia Council, NSW Ministry for the Arts.



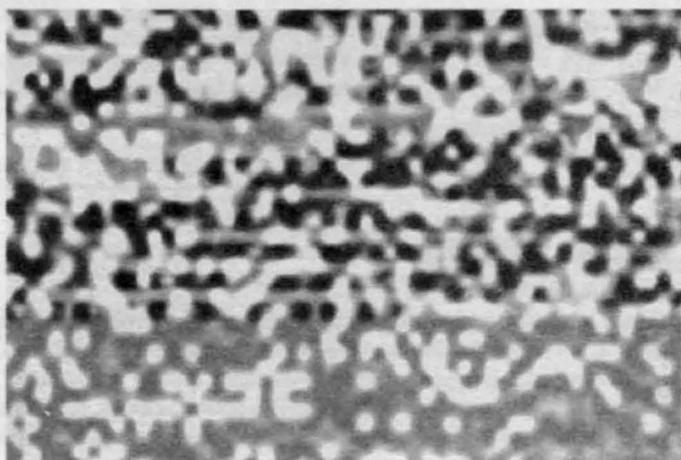
DeadCentre

image: Maria Miranda

## The Invisible Songs Project

**Steven Ball**

My current work in progress researches 'digital materialism', a term coined to suggest the 'raw material' of media, and translating the code between sound and image. The animated results will be integrated with investigations of the nature of particular places as a series of short video 'songs.' An extensive treatment of this work can be found in the latest *Cantrills Filmnotes* (no. 91/92, 1999).



As an unfunded (to date) project the working process is necessarily opportunistic and utilises whatever available resources I can freely access. Consequently the biggest technical challenges are largely practical and logistical ones of the storage and transportation of large files and finding enough time to work on it.

I have worked as a film, video and installation artist intermittently since graduating from an English art school in the early 80s. For some years I was closely associated with the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group and produced a large number of films in that gauge. In addition I have worked as a writer as well as curator and administrator with a number of local screen culture organisations

[www.starnet.com.au/sball](http://www.starnet.com.au/sball) Completion 2000.

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# Interactive Installations

## A very Pentatonic Scale

**Damian Castaldi**

Video, installation and tuned aluminium bars. "The video plays the instrument" as light intensity levels vary depending on the changing video image of Curl Curl rockface and the spectator's body movement between the screen and five transducers (mounted on a pentatonic scale).

The challenge is to program a MAX patch that will successfully coordinate the triggering process. This involves translating source data from Low Level 2 transducers to an analog to MIDI digitiser and outputting to actuators which play the pentatonic scale, to create an intriguing synergy between video, body and acoustics.

Damian Castaldi's work explores audiovisual and instrumental crossroads between gesture-based, interactive audio systems and digital image for installation and the web. He was the 1997 recipient of the Australia Council New Media Art & Technology partnership with the ABC and works independently and in collaboration with the national artists' collective nervous\_objects.

Completion August 1999.

## self remembering—optimal viewing distance

**James Verdon**

This is the 4th in a series of digital screen based installations interrogating memory and the electronic viewing screen as utilising common technologies of re-presentation and simulation. The installation seeks to articulate connections between memory and the electronic screen as viewed through the sieve of these technologies.

The primary technical challenges relate to the use of relatively unproven digital video delivery technology. The project utilises broadcast quality random access digital video and audio data from dedicated "black boxes." This data is mixed with live video feed signal and lighting controls all triggered by a visitor's jumping through a hopscotch court. No one in Australia has used this particular hardware before, and so the project has been a series of steep independent learning curves.

James Verdon is an artist working primarily with electronic media and emerging technologies, often utilising light as a primary interactive element. He is Course Coordinator and teaches theory and studio components of Electronic Design and Interactive Media (EDIM) in the Arts Department at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne.

Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP), Melbourne, August-September 1999. Australia Council.

## Amor Veneris A

**Mari Velonaki**

*Amor Veneris A* is a breath-activated installation (hard disk, breath sensor, various electronic media). A woman's face is viewed through a magnifying glass which is installed on the top of a wooden box. The spectator can activate/awake her by blowing against her face using the breath switch which protrudes from the box and connects the spectator with the screen woman.



To use the breath switch to activate the quick-time movies, adaptations had to be made due to the fact that the switch was initially designed as an assisting device for people with paraplegia. These adaptations were implemented by means of a differential communications interface (RS-422) in a fully custom made electronics box. Breath sensor (switch) supplied by Enabling Devices-Toys for Special Children, NY, USA.

Mari Velonaki lives and works in Sydney. In a series of installations she aims to engage the spectator with the digital character in an interplay activated by sensory triggered interfaces (speech recognition, eye-tracking, breathing/blowing). Her work has been shown at Artspace, PICA and Ton-Bild Spectakel/Greifensee. *Amor Veneris A* is a derivative of *Amor Veneris*, Herringbone Gallery, Sydney, Mardi Gras, 1999.

MAAP 99, Science Centre, Brisbane, September 3 - 12.

## Facemen

**David Cox**

Utilising small 'panasonic' video LCD projector, commercial doll, video camcorder and face peep hole, *Faceman* is an installation which uses a small video projector to project the face of the onlooker onto a small puppet. By placing his/her face in a peep-hole cut in a flat surface the viewer then sees a puppet figure with a video-projected face. The work examines the complicity of the viewer in the form and nature of spectacular society.

In playing along with the implicit request of the work (to poke one's head through the hole) the viewer automatically finds her face and speech transposed onto the symbol of manipulation—the puppet. The work aims to playfully examine the complex relationships between viewer and work, and by extension the role of video imagery in society as a whole.

The work extends ideas explored in earlier work, such as my 1990 black and white film *Puppen-head*. This and my 1998 film *Otherzone* examined the overall themes of identity, paranoia and technophobia. David Cox is Digital Screen Production Lecturer, Griffith University, Brisbane.

## the de quincey tapes

**John Gillies, Tess de Quincey**

In this 15 minute video, different parts of the body are animated independently and by different forces. A dialogue of the parts of the body is set up where different states are conjured and extended to the audience. A musical soundtrack is built up from the sounds of strings being struck, bowed, plucked on string quartet, guitar, prepared piano etc.

John Gillies, media artist, musician, New Media Arts Fund Fellowship; Tess de Quincey, dancer, choreographer, Australia Council Choreographic Fellowship.

# Public Art

## the building that speaks

**Robyn Backen**

*the building that speaks* is a public art project proposed by Robyn Backen and is at present in the development stage with its principal commissioner, the Brisbane Powerhouse Centre for the Live Arts. This project focuses on the facade of the building. *the building that speaks* has an interior and an exterior. The exterior utilises the existing windows/portholes on the boilerhouse facade as a frame from which to blink Morse Code out towards the city. The interior will house a computer which will host the messages. One of the possible messages may be the final Morse Code transmitted by a French vessel (1997) "calling all, this is our last cry before our eternal silence." The public will also be able to send messages from the computer to the facade.



Powerhouse, Centre for the Living Arts

Robyn Backen

The interior and exterior will be married by a computer interface. The facade lights will be generated by a computer interface and a Morse Code translator/switcher. Director will synthesise texts generated by the interaction of members of the public with a touch screen. These texts will be displayed and compiled into histories.

Robyn Backen is a Sydney-based artist focusing on installation and public art projects. She is one of the artists commissioned to develop a public art work for the Sydney Sculpture Walk; this work is in its final stages of completion. Robyn Backen is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

Likely completion: early 2000. Brisbane Powerhouse Centre for the Live Arts.

# Video/Film

## Tracking

**Denis Beaubois**

*Tracking* is an installation exploring the reading of an event through the facial expressions of the viewer. The response of the viewer formulates its own narrative which we, as observers, attempt to decode. It questions the role of documentation as representation and in its place suggests a process of translation.

The proposal is to devise a system of video monitoring which makes use of infra-red technology and night viewing equipment to scan and record audiences viewing performances. The video signal will be relayed in real time to the front of the venue and displayed outside (in the street) via a monitor. All who pass the theatre at the time of performance encounter a real time displaced electronic audience symbolically observing the pedestrian and transient traffic.

Born in Mauritius in 1970, Denis Beaubois lives and works in Sydney. His practice includes performance, video and photography. He has performed and exhibited throughout Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the United States. He has also worked as deviser and performer with Post Arrivals (1993-95) and Gravity Feed (1994-99). His work titled *in the event of amnesia the city will recall...* won the Bonn Videonale 8 in Germany. He is presently working in Germany as Artist in Residence at the Artist Unlimited Group in Bielefeld.

This work was tested as part of *Space 1999* in May this year. It will be presented in Germany in October 1999.

## Atomic Fuzz

**Ian Haig**

Video clip. Animation: Ian Haig, 3 mins. Psychotronic grind....two headed transplant mutants, 50s monster movies, flying saucers, creatures from black lagoons, laboratory experiments, brain operations, invaders from Mars and lots of fuzz...

The biggest technical challenge in this project was working with Atomic Fuzz, because of their recent brain surgery.

Ian Haig is a media artist working across the areas of video, computer animation, and installation. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at Video-Brasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Pandemonium Festival of moving images, UK.

Completion September 99.



## Please Wait Here

**Dominic Redfern**

*Please Wait Here* is a video which also forms the central component of an installation piece. It takes as its subject matter daytime television, daytime talk in particular. It examines TV as a sort of campfire onto which we project our thoughts, drifting in and out of the content. The work is not, however, a negative critique of daytime TV's opiate qualities. It seeks rather to embrace and explore some of the possibilities for a contemplative mode of awareness while in the viewing state.

The work took about 6 months to complete, pushing my home system to its limits, often taking up to 23 hours to preview minor changes to a minute or less of work. A 24 hour working method developed in which I would set the computer to render and then go off to bed, setting the alarm for a time when the computer predicted it would complete its rendering. Once completed the work cannot be backed up as a single file due to its size and has to be reconstructed from component parts each time I wish to copy it.

Dominic Redfern is a lecturer in Video Installation at RMIT in the Media Arts course area. He has exhibited work in galleries such as First Floor, Project Space, @It TV and Westspace, and the Sydney Film Festival, Melbourne International Festival and the *Anemone* Program (WA).

To be screened at the Film and Television Institute of Western Australia and tour regional galleries as part of the *Art's Edge* touring program.

# multimedia symposium

## NT\*NT northern territory xposure

The Northern Territory's first Multimedia Symposium  
**30 SEPTEMBER - 4 OCTOBER**  
 A 5 day intensive examination and exploration of new media arts  
**SEPTEMBER 30**  
 Opening Night at the DARWIN ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE:  
 presentations and performances by Stelarc,  
 a local Aboriginal group and skadada  
**OCTOBER 1 - 3**  
 Presentations and Forums at the MUSEUM & ART  
 GALLERY of the NT and the SKI CLUB: with national  
 and international multimedia artists, writers and performers  
 "Hacker's Tent" at the SKI CLUB plus  
**EVENING EVENTS:** 24HR ART, NTU, the Darwin  
 Correctional Facility, Extreme T Dance Party  
 and a Screen Arts dinner at  
 Darwin's Deckchair Cinema!  
**OCTOBER 3 - 4**  
 Workshops at QANTM, NTU, CIYA: in arts  
 marketing and promotions on the net,  
 youth web works and writing on line

**Bookings:**  
 Mary Jane Overall  
 (08) 8981 1449  
[www.nxtnt.net](http://www.nxtnt.net)  
 for up to-date-event listings

animated gif competition sponsored by 24HR ART

## Experimenta Media Arts

### Program of Events

#### CONVERGENCE Forum Series

#3 Fusion of Technologies  
 -26 August 1999

#4 Simulation Culture  
 & launch of MESH 13 - CyberBullies - online  
 -21 October 1999

each at 7.30pm  
 OPENChannel Studio, 13 Victoria Street, Fitzroy

#### 2 Experimental Film Screening Programs

Sunday 12 September 1999  
 at Cinemedia@Treasury Theatre  
 1 Macarthur Street, East Melbourne

#### Bananarama2000

a new web art work by Tracey Benson  
 at our Online Gallery  
 from 22 June 1999

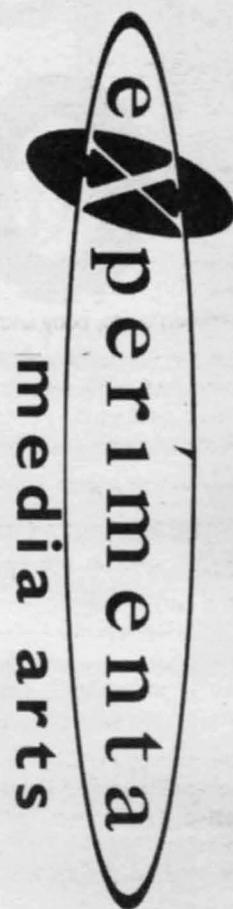
AND...coming right at you in November...

### MANIFESTO

our salute to new possibilities within Australian media arts culture

Check out our website for details: <http://www.experimenta.org>  
 Full program released in October.

Experimenta Media Arts gratefully acknowledges the support of the  
 Australian Film Commission, Cinemedia and Arts Victoria



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 or contact the competition office on (02) 9563 6159  
 email: [filmfest@usu.usyd.edu.au](mailto:filmfest@usu.usyd.edu.au)

## Online Australia Cultural Festival 1999

### <INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE>

3V Media, as organiser of The Online Australia National Cultural Festival, invites the participation of cultural organisations and independent artists in this inaugural online event.

The Festival will be a showcase for Australian online cultural expression and aims to attract a wide national and international audience to the exhibition website to promote and encourage engagement with Australian arts and culture online.

The Festival is an outcome of Project One, a workshop held in Sydney on May 25 as part of Online Australia Year, a commonwealth government initiative co-ordinated by the National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE).

The first stage of the Festival will be launched in early September, with the main Festival launch in November.

The Festival organisers are seeking online projects and other work suitable for the Festival exhibition website.

For further information and submission details please contact us through the website at [www.culture.com.au](http://www.culture.com.au), via email to [culture@media.com.au](mailto:culture@media.com.au), or by phone on 02 9281 7955.



[3vmedia.com.au](http://3vmedia.com.au)

Building Australia's online communities, involving Australians in

# Online get online in '99 Australia

[www.onlineaustralia.net.au](http://www.onlineaustralia.net.au)

Online Australia presents an exciting range  
of online cultural events

- **Derrida's World First Webcast**

Jacques Derrida, the world's most famous philosopher, will give a public address at the Sydney Town Hall August 12 8pm - 11pm. This address will be simultaneously webcast on [www.onlineaustralia.net.au](http://www.onlineaustralia.net.au)

- **AWABA - The Online Australia Virtual World launch**

A virtual reality training ground. Create your own world online  
September 2

- **Webcast of the World Science Fiction Convention and Annual Hugo Awards**

@ Aussiecon3 The 57th WorldCon September 2 - 6 Melbourne

- **MAAP99 - Multimedia Arts Asia Pacific Festival**

MAAP99 presents an extraordinary collection of exhibitions and events September 3 - 12 Brisbane

- **Culture Online Agenda Forum**

Focusing on the opportunities and challenges of the information economy for cultural industries and practitioners  
September 9 Brisbane

- **APT3 - Asia Pacific Triennial**

Beyond the Future September 9 - 2000 Brisbane

- **Online Australia Culture Festival**

A showcase of Australian arts & culture online September

Find out more about these events go to [www.onlineaustralia.net.au](http://www.onlineaustralia.net.au)

Email - [oa@noie.gov.au](mailto:oa@noie.gov.au)

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